FRIENDS OF
MAXX
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APR
$2.95
$4.05 CANADA
DANGER
FLAMMABLE
YOU KNOW, MICKEY, SITTING UNDER THIS DANGEROUS PROPANE TANK IS KIND OF LIKE A SYMBOL OF OUR WHOLE RELATIONSHIP.
SHUT UP.
HEY GANG, DO YOU HAVE THE GUTS TO READ A COMIC ABOUT EMOTIONAL JEOPARDY INSTEAD OF THAT TYPICAL PHYSICAL JEOPARDY CRAP?

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FRIENDS OF MAXX #1 FEATURING DUDE JAPAN. APRIL 1996. FIRST PRINTING. An Image Comics Title published by Image Comics, 1440 N. Harbor Boulevard, #305 Fullerton, CA 92635.
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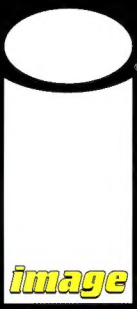
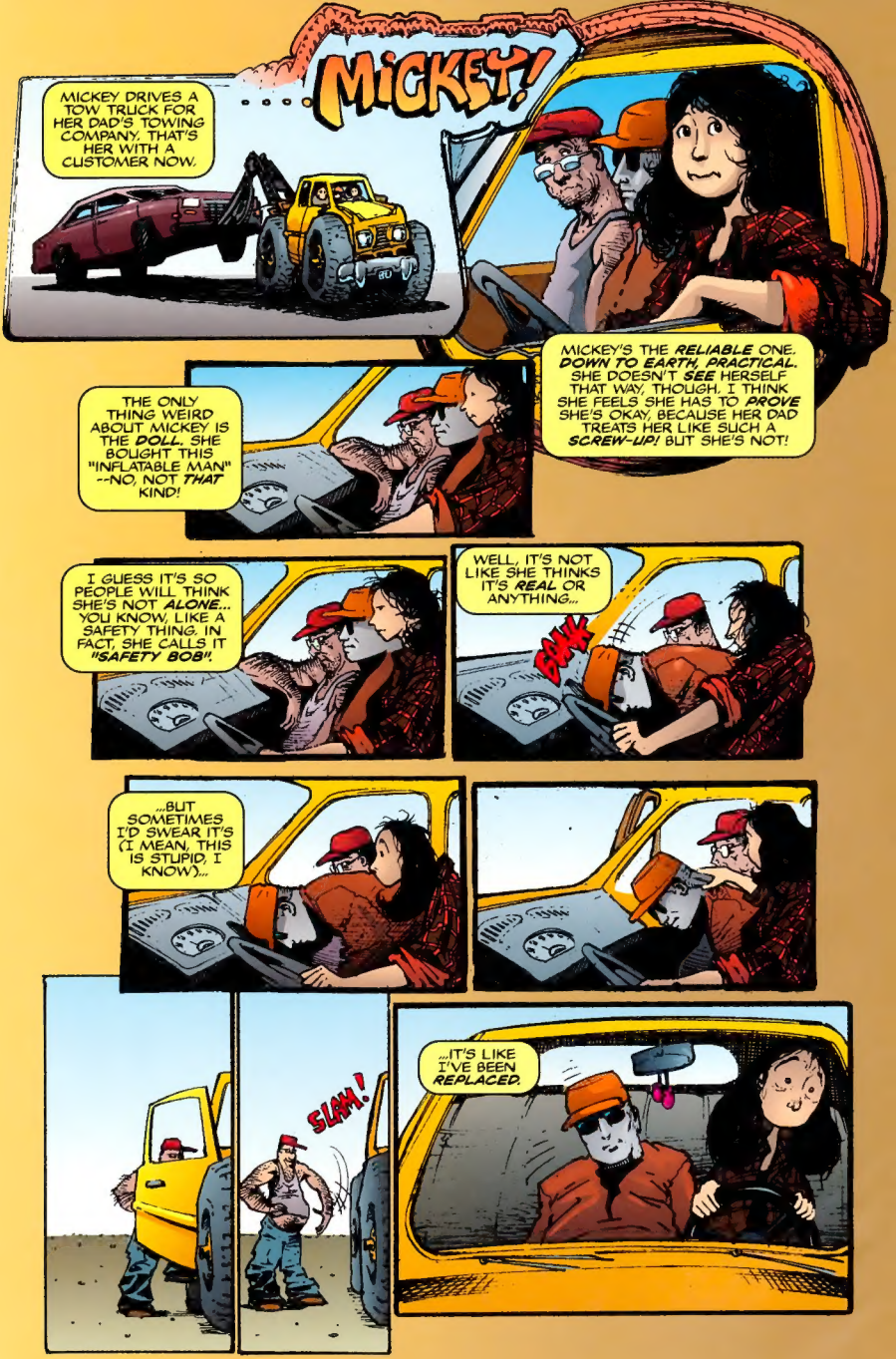
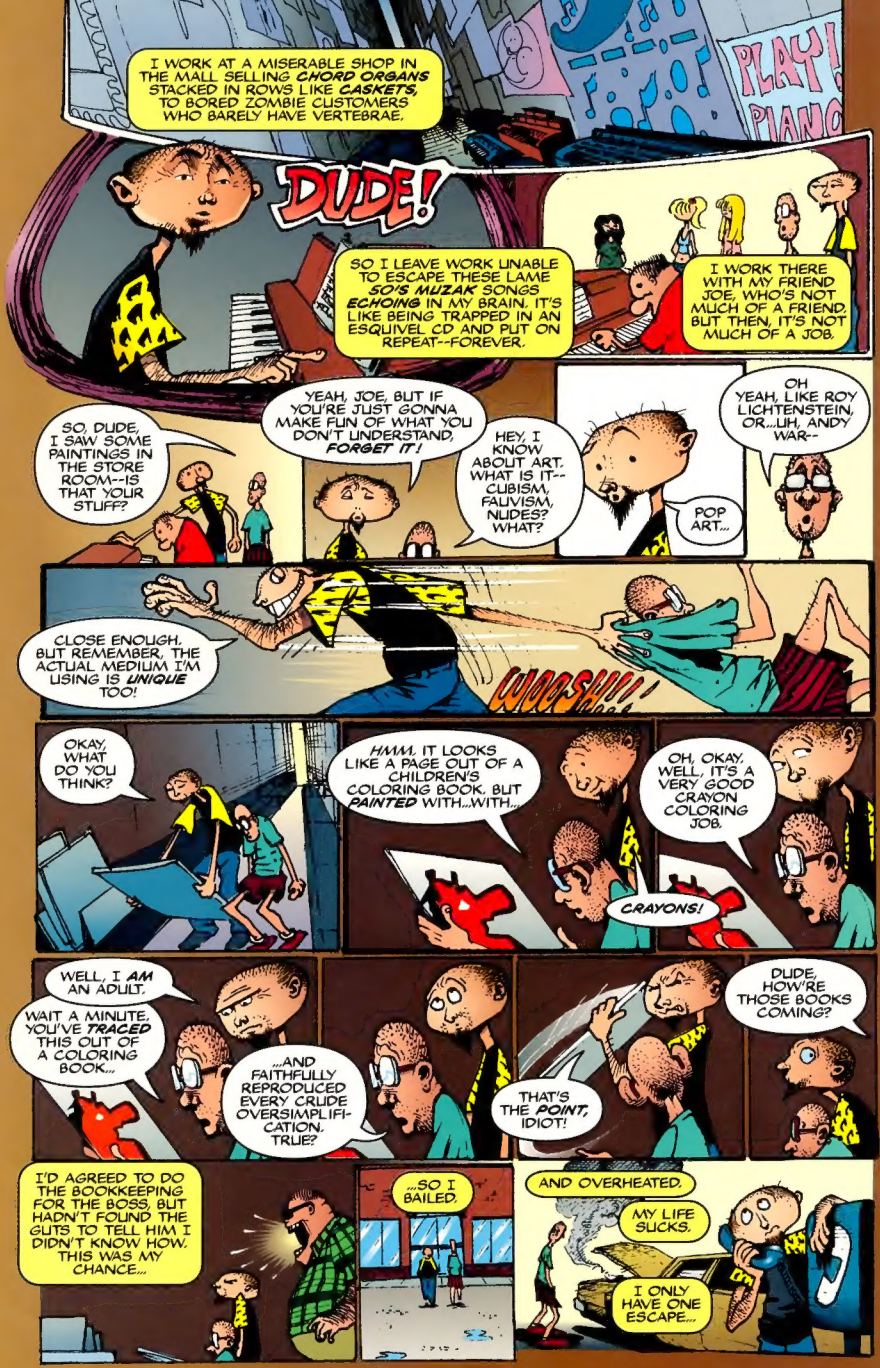
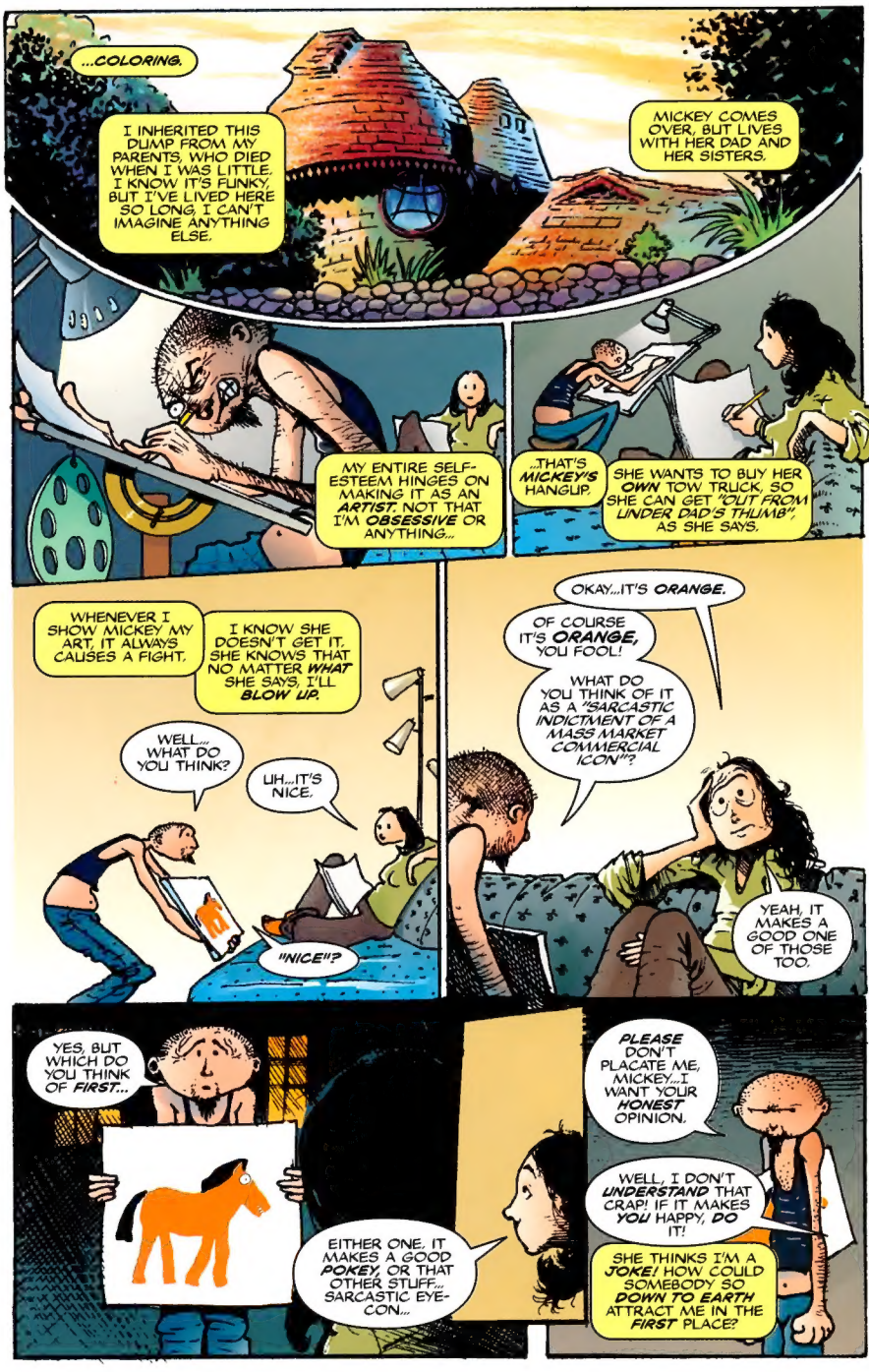


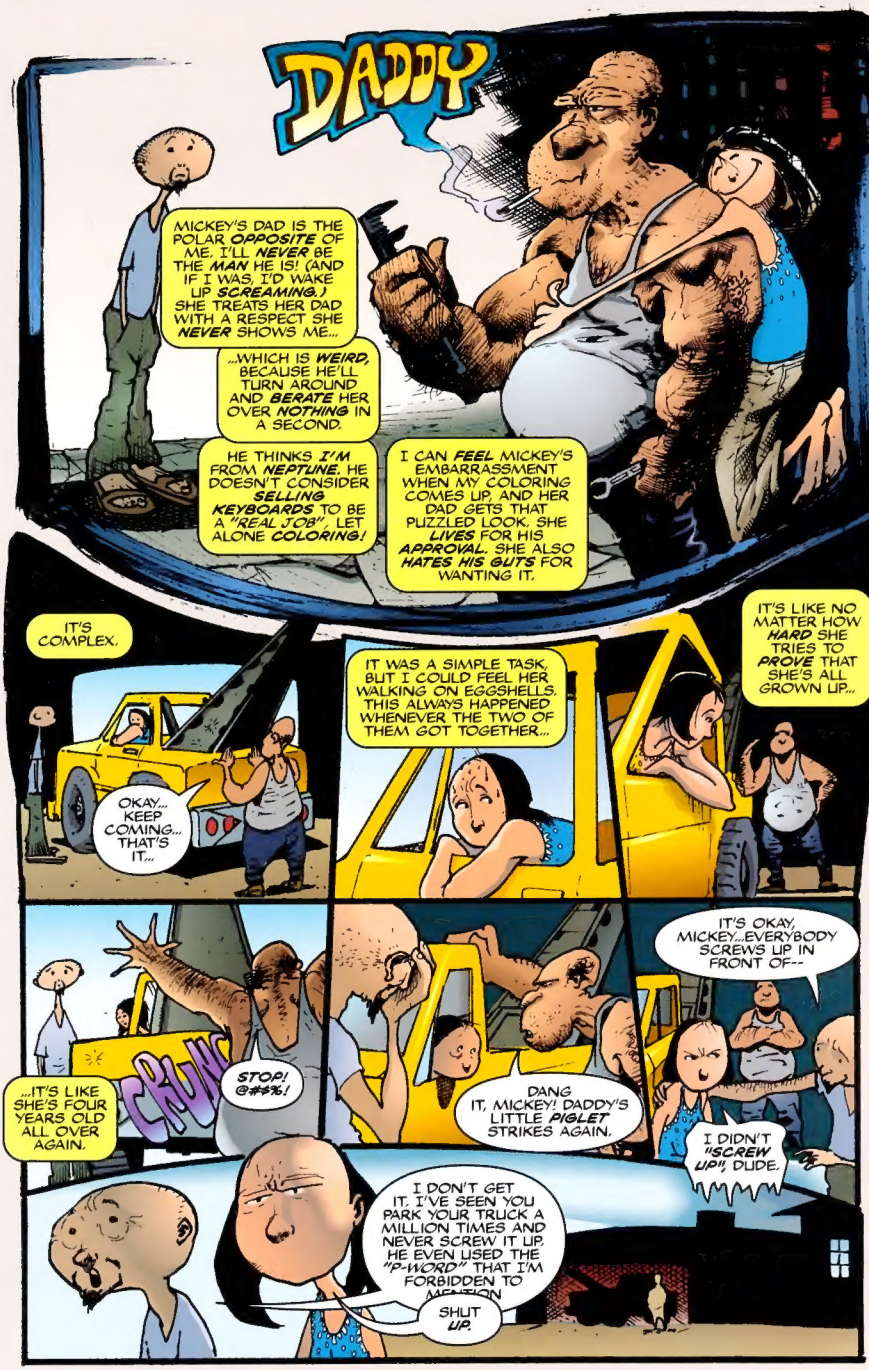
HI. I'M DUDE. DUDE JAPAN. THAT'S NOT MY REAL NAME, JUST A NICKNAME.
THAT'S MY GIRLFRIEND MICKEY.
CRAP.
A WHILE BACK I WAS TAKING A COUPLE OF FRIENDS TO THE AIRPORT --THIS HOMELESS GUY, MAXX, AND JULIE, THIS WOMAN FROM SOCIAL SERVICES WHO LOOKED AFTER HIM.
OKAY, REMEMBER, WATER THE PLANTS TWICE A WEEK, GOLDFISH ONCE A DAY, AND--
GATE 26
YOU GAVE US A LIST, REMEMBER?
OH, ONE MORE THING --THE MOUSE TRAPS--
ON THE LIST...
HAVE FUN!
HEY! IF YOU RUN OUT OF FISH FOOD--
THEY'LL MANAGE! C'MON!
OKAY, OKAY! JEEZ!
ME AND MICKEY HAVE BEEN TOGETHER FOR A FEW YEARS, BUT, WELL, ALL THE ROMANTIC ILLUSIONS ARE PRETTY MUCH GONE.
AW...WHAT AM I SAYING? WE'RE SICK OF EVEN LOOKIN' AT EACH OTHER!
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WHEN YOU'RE LOCKED IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS ALL YOUR PERSONAL DIRT--IT'S TIME TO FACE YOUR OWN B.S. AND CHANGE, OR FIND SOMEBODY NEW TO SCREW UP.

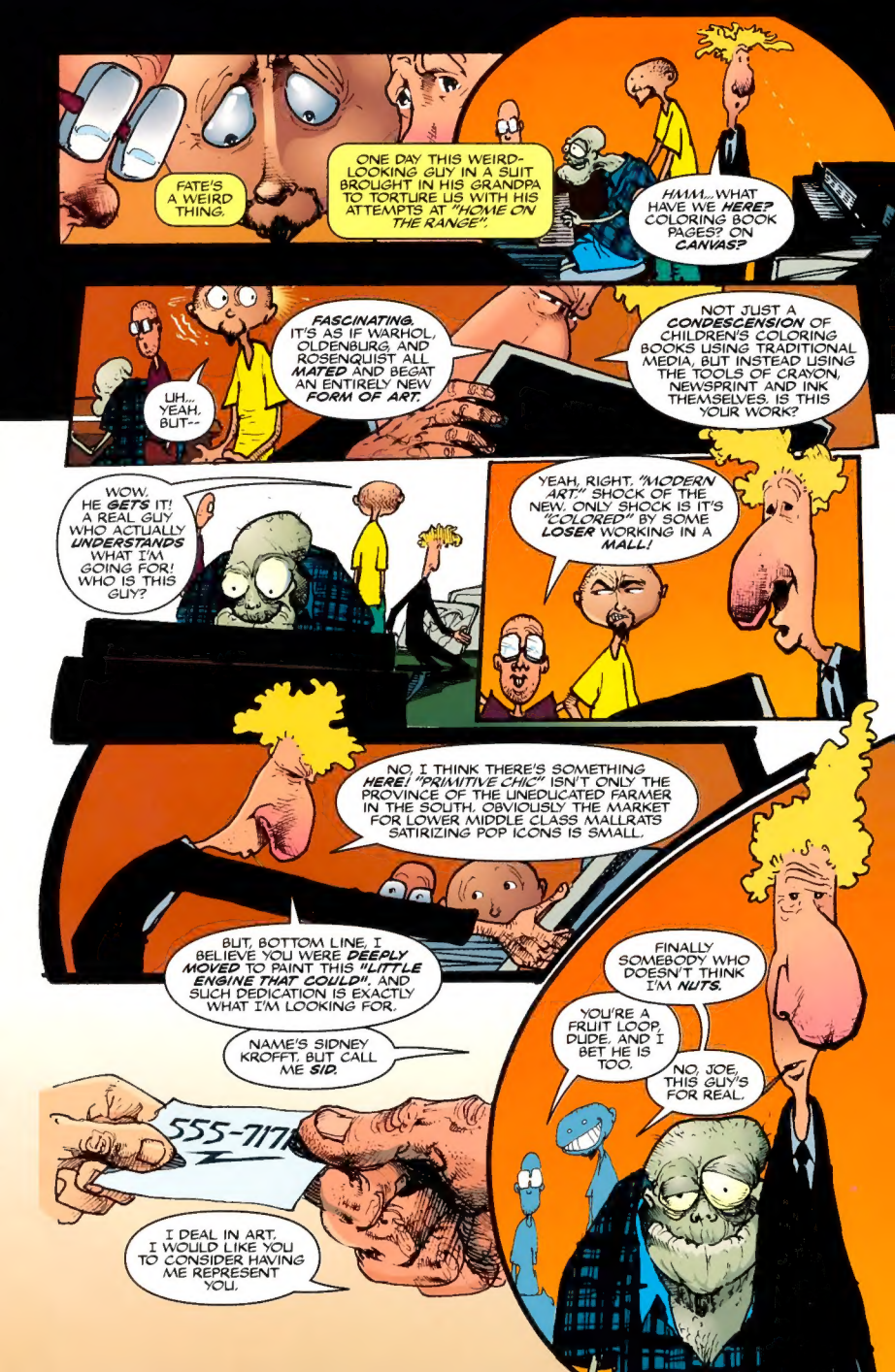

MICKEY!
MICKEY DRIVES A TOW TRUCK FOR HER DAD'S TOWING COMPANY. THAT'S HER WITH A CUSTOMER NOW.
MICKEY'S THE *RELIABLE* ONE. *DOWN TO EARTH, PRACTICAL.* SHE DOESN'T *SEE* HERSELF THAT WAY, THOUGH. I THINK SHE FEELS SHE HAS TO *PROVE* SHE'S OKAY, BECAUSE HER DAD TREATS HER LIKE SUCH A *SCREW-UP!* BUT SHE'S NOT!
THE ONLY THING WEIRD ABOUT MICKEY IS THE *DOLL.* SHE BOUGHT THIS "INFLATABLE MAN" --NO, NOT *THAT* KIND!
I GUESS IT'S SO PEOPLE WILL THINK SHE'S NOT *ALONE*... YOU KNOW, LIKE A SAFETY THING. IN FACT, SHE CALLS IT *"SAFETY BOB".*
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE THINKS IT'S *REAL* OR ANYTHING...
SQUIK
...BUT SOMETIMES I'D SWEAR IT'S (I MEAN, THIS IS STUPID, I KNOW)...
SLAM!
...IT'S LIKE I'VE BEEN *REPLACED.*

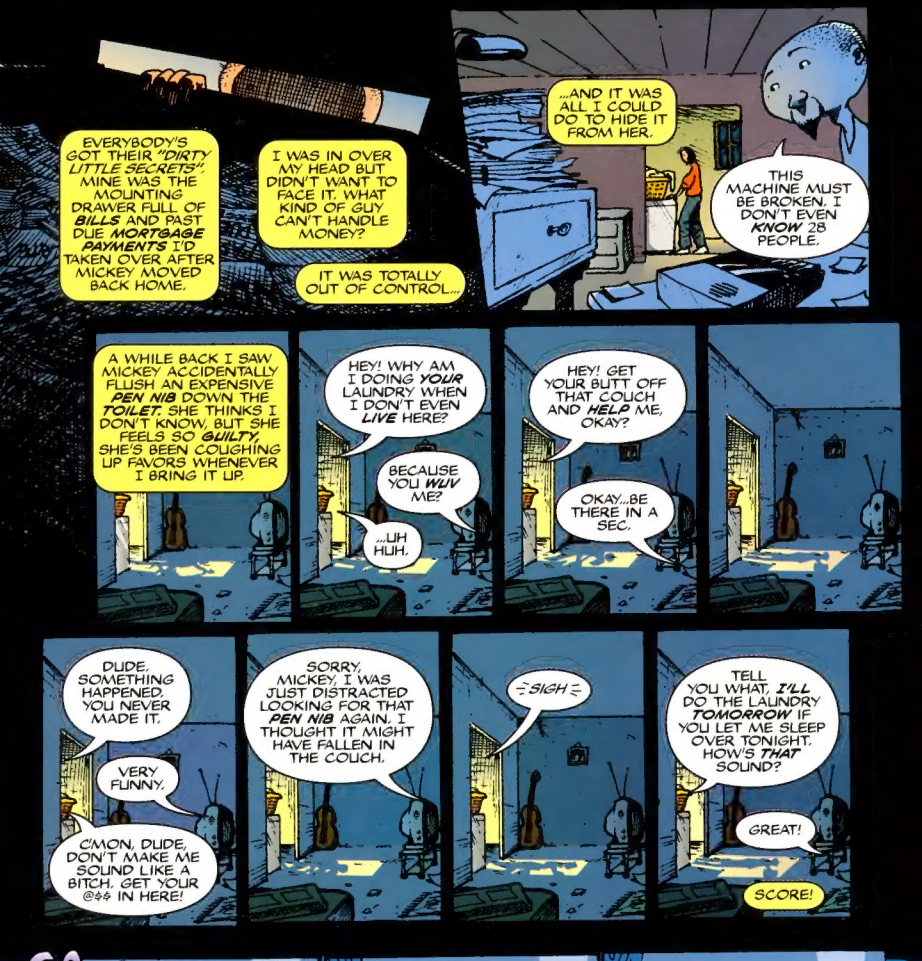

I WORK AT A MISERABLE SHOP IN THE MALL SELLING CHORD ORGANS STACKED IN ROWS LIKE CASKETS, TO BORED ZOMBIE CUSTOMERS WHO BARELY HAVE VERTEBRAE.
PLAY! PIANO
DUDE!
SO I LEAVE WORK UNABLE TO ESCAPE THESE LAME SO'S MUZAK SONGS ECHOING IN MY BRAIN. IT'S LIKE BEING TRAPPED IN AN ESQUIVEL CD AND PUT ON REPEAT--FOREVER.
I WORK THERE WITH MY FRIEND JOE, WHO'S NOT MUCH OF A FRIEND. BUT THEN, IT'S NOT MUCH OF A JOB.
SO, DUDE, I SAW SOME PAINTINGS IN THE STORE ROOM--IS THAT YOUR STUFF?
YEAH, JOE, BUT IF YOU'RE JUST GONNA MAKE FUN OF WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, FORGET IT!
HEY, I KNOW ABOUT ART. WHAT IS IT--CUBISM, FAUVISM, NUDES? WHAT?
POP ART...
OH YEAH, LIKE ROY LICHTENSTEIN, OR...UH, ANDY WAR--
CLOSE ENOUGH. BUT REMEMBER, THE ACTUAL MEDIUM I'M USING IS UNIQUE TOO!
WOOSH!!!
OKAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HMM. IT LOOKS LIKE A PAGE OUT OF A CHILDREN'S COLORING BOOK. BUT PAINTED WITH...WITH...
OH, OKAY. WELL, IT'S A VERY GOOD CRAYON COLORING JOB.
CRAYONS!
WELL, I AM AN ADULT.
WAIT A MINUTE. YOU'VE TRACED THIS OUT OF A COLORING BOOK...
...AND FAITHFULLY REPRODUCED EVERY CRUDE OVERSIMPLIFICATION. TRUE?
THAT'S THE POINT, IDIOT!
DUDE, HOW'RE THOSE BOOKS COMING?
I'D AGREED TO DO THE BOOKKEEPING FOR THE BOSS, BUT HADN'T FOUND THE GUTS TO TELL HIM I DIDN'T KNOW HOW. THIS WAS MY CHANCE...
...SO I BAILED.
AND OVERHEATED.
MY LIFE SUCKS.
I ONLY HAVE ONE ESCAPE...


...COLORING.
I INHERITED THIS DUMP FROM MY PARENTS, WHO DIED WHEN I WAS LITTLE. I KNOW IT'S FUNKY, BUT I'VE LIVED HERE SO LONG, I CAN'T IMAGINE ANYTHING ELSE.
MICKEY COMES OVER, BUT LIVES WITH HER DAD AND HER SISTERS.
MY ENTIRE SELF-ESTEEM HINGES ON MAKING IT AS AN ARTIST. NOT THAT I'M OBSESSIVE OR ANYTHING...
...THAT'S MICKEY'S HANGUP.
SHE WANTS TO BUY HER OWN TOW TRUCK, SO SHE CAN GET "OUT FROM UNDER DAD'S THUMB", AS SHE SAYS.
WHENEVER I SHOW MICKEY MY ART, IT ALWAYS CAUSES A FIGHT.
I KNOW SHE DOESN'T GET IT. SHE KNOWS THAT NO MATTER WHAT SHE SAYS, I'LL BLOW UP.
WELL... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
UH... IT'S NICE.
"NICE"?
OKAY... IT'S ORANGE.
OF COURSE IT'S ORANGE, YOU FOOL!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT AS A "SARCASTIC INDICTMENT OF A MASS MARKET COMMERCIAL ICON"?
YEAH, IT MAKES A GOOD ONE OF THOSE TOO.
YES, BUT WHICH DO YOU THINK OF FIRST...
EITHER ONE. IT MAKES A GOOD POKEY, OR THAT OTHER STUFF... SARCASTIC EYE-CON...
PLEASE DON'T PLACATE ME, MICKEY... I WANT YOUR HONEST OPINION.
WELL, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT CRAP! IF IT MAKES YOU HAPPY, DO IT!
SHE THINKS I'M A JOKE! HOW COULD SOMEBODY SO DOWN TO EARTH ATTRACT ME IN THE FIRST PLACE?

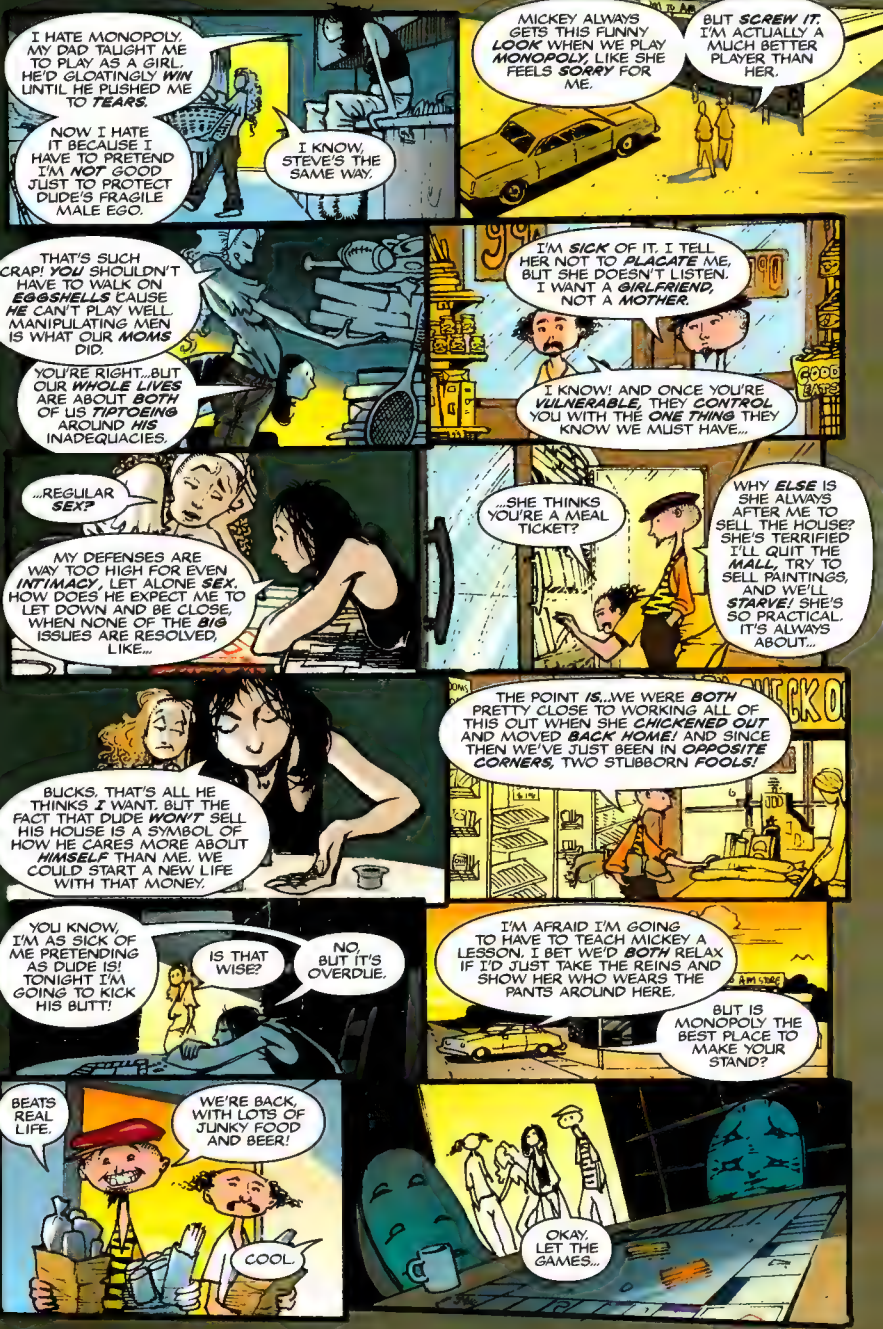
AWW...C'MON, DON'T BE A "MR. SOUR-PUSS"! YOU'LL BE A FAMOUS ARTIST SOMEDAY. EVEN SAFETY BOB SAYS SO.
YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WITH SOMEBODY TOO LONG, WHEN THIS KIND OF TALK DOESN'T SOUND WEIRD ANYMORE.
MICKEY DREAMS OF ESCAPE ALSO.
USED TOW TRUCK FOR SALE... HMM.
HERS REVOLVE AROUND PAYING OFF THE 20 THOUSAND HER DAD LOANED HER TO GO TO COLLEGE.
THE IRONY OF PAYING FOR A "HIGHER EDUCATION" BY DRIVING A TOW TRUCK IS NOT LOST ON HER.
SHE WANTS ME TO SELL THE HOUSE JUST TO PAY HER DEBT. THIS IS A SOURCE OF MAJOR FRICTION, BECAUSE...I WON'T.
MY FAVORITE LINE IS:
IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME, YOU'D SELL THIS DUMP AND HELP ME BE FREE OF DADDY!
BUT IT'S MY HOUSE! HER DEBT!
I KNOW SHE FEELS THIS AS AN ENORMOUS REJECTION OF HER.
BUT IF SHE THINKS I'M GONNA GIVE UP MY LEVERAGE WITH HER...
...SHE'S A @#$%&#@ IDIOT!
I TELL HER THIS IN A CLUMSY WAY THAT HAS LESS TO DO WITH ILLUMINATION...
...AND MORE TO DO WITH ME BEING PISSED ABOUT POKEY.
AND WE'RE OFF!

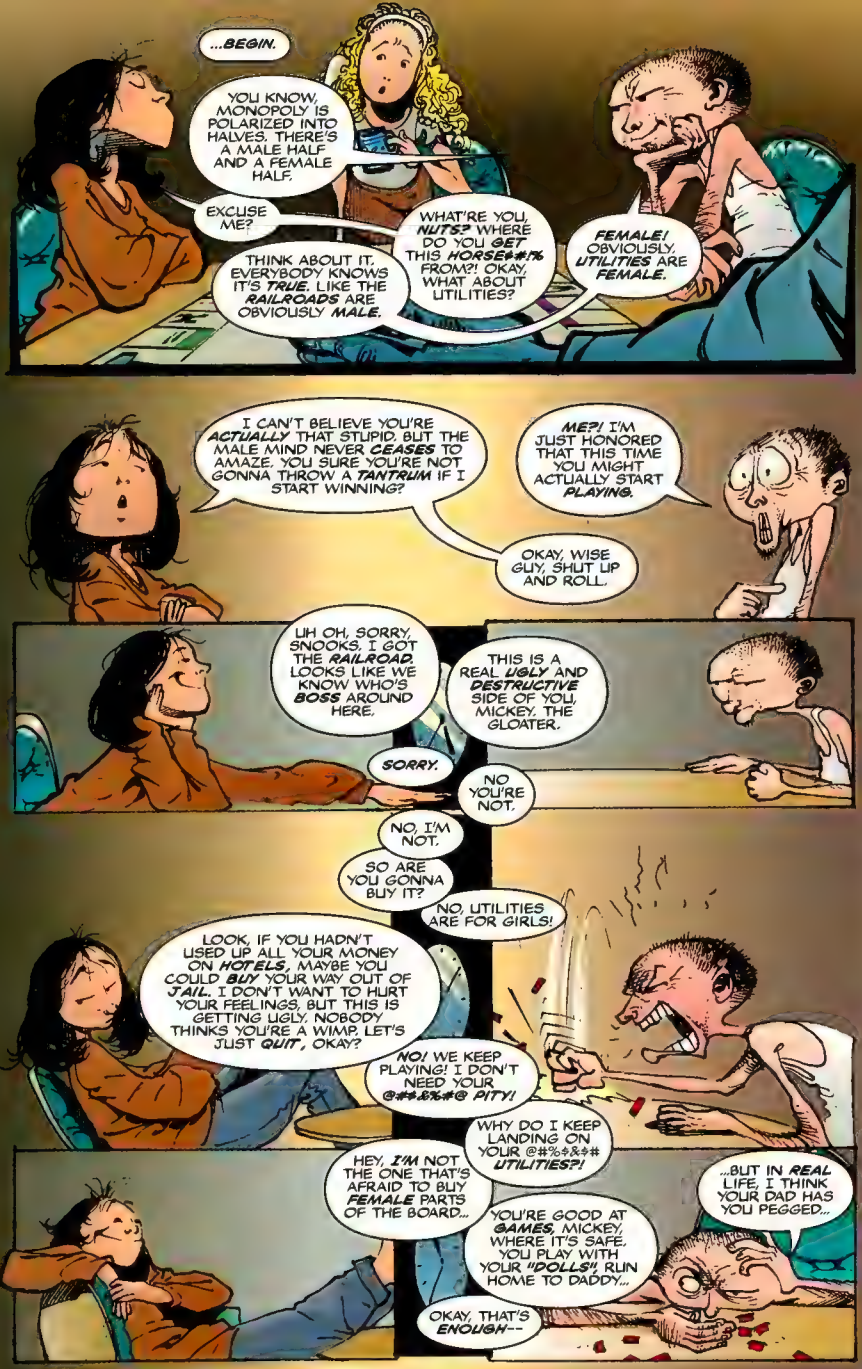

DADDY
MICKEY'S DAD IS THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF ME. I'LL NEVER BE THE MAN HE IS! (AND IF I WAS, I'D WAKE UP SCREAMING.) SHE TREATS HER DAD WITH A RESPECT SHE NEVER SHOWS ME...
...WHICH IS WEIRD, BECAUSE HE'LL TURN AROUND AND BERATE HER OVER NOTHING IN A SECOND.
HE THINKS I'M FROM NEPTUNE. HE DOESN'T CONSIDER SELLING KEYBOARDS TO BE A "REAL JOB", LET ALONE COLORING!
I CAN FEEL MICKEY'S EMBARRASSMENT WHEN MY COLORING COMES UP, AND HER DAD GETS THAT PUZZLED LOOK. SHE LIVES FOR HIS APPROVAL. SHE ALSO HATES HIS GUTS FOR WANTING IT.
IT'S COMPLEX.
OKAY... KEEP COMING... THAT'S IT...
IT WAS A SIMPLE TASK, BUT I COULD FEEL HER WALKING ON EGGSHELLS. THIS ALWAYS HAPPENED WHENEVER THE TWO OF THEM GOT TOGETHER...
IT'S LIKE NO MATTER HOW HARD SHE TRIES TO PROVE THAT SHE'S ALL GROWN UP...
...IT'S LIKE SHE'S FOUR YEARS OLD ALL OVER AGAIN.
CRUNK
STOP! @#%!
DANG IT, MICKEY! DADDY'S LITTLE PIGLET STRIKES AGAIN.
IT'S OKAY, MICKEY...EVERYBODY SCREWS UP IN FRONT OF--
I DIDN'T "SCREW UP", DUDE.
I DON'T GET IT. I'VE SEEN YOU PARK YOUR TRUCK A MILLION TIMES AND NEVER SCREW IT UP. HE EVEN USED THE "P-WORD" THAT I'M FORBIDDEN TO MENTION
SHUT UP.


FATE'S A WEIRD THING.
ONE DAY THIS WEIRD-LOOKING GUY IN A SUIT BROUGHT IN HIS GRANDPA TO TORTURE US WITH HIS ATTEMPTS AT "HOME ON THE RANGE".
HMM... WHAT HAVE WE HERE? COLORING BOOK PAGES? ON CANVAS?
UH... YEAH, BUT--
FASCINATING. IT'S AS IF WARHOL, OLDENBURG, AND ROSENQUIST ALL MATED AND BEGAT AN ENTIRELY NEW FORM OF ART.
NOT JUST A CONDESCENSION OF CHILDREN'S COLORING BOOKS USING TRADITIONAL MEDIA, BUT INSTEAD USING THE TOOLS OF CRAYON, NEWSPRINT AND INK THEMSELVES. IS THIS YOUR WORK?
WOW. HE GETS IT! A REAL GUY WHO ACTUALLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT I'M GOING FOR! WHO IS THIS GUY?
YEAH, RIGHT. "MODERN ART." SHOCK OF THE NEW. ONLY SHOCK IS IT'S "COLORED" BY SOME LOSER WORKING IN A MALL!
NO, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING HERE! "PRIMITIVE CHIC"" ISN'T ONLY THE PROVINCE OF THE UNEDUCATED FARMER IN THE SOUTH. OBVIOUSLY THE MARKET FOR LOWER MIDDLE CLASS MALLRATS SATIRIZING POP ICONS IS SMALL.
BUT, BOTTOM LINE, I BELIEVE YOU WERE DEEPLY MOVED TO PAINT THIS "LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD", AND SUCH DEDICATION IS EXACTLY WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
NAME'S SIDNEY KROFFT, BUT CALL ME SID.
555-7171
I DEAL IN ART. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO CONSIDER HAVING ME REPRESENT YOU.
FINALLY SOMEBODY WHO DOESN'T THINK I'M NUTS.
YOU'RE A FRUIT LOOP, DUDE, AND I BET HE IS TOO.
NO, JOE, THIS GUY'S FOR REAL.

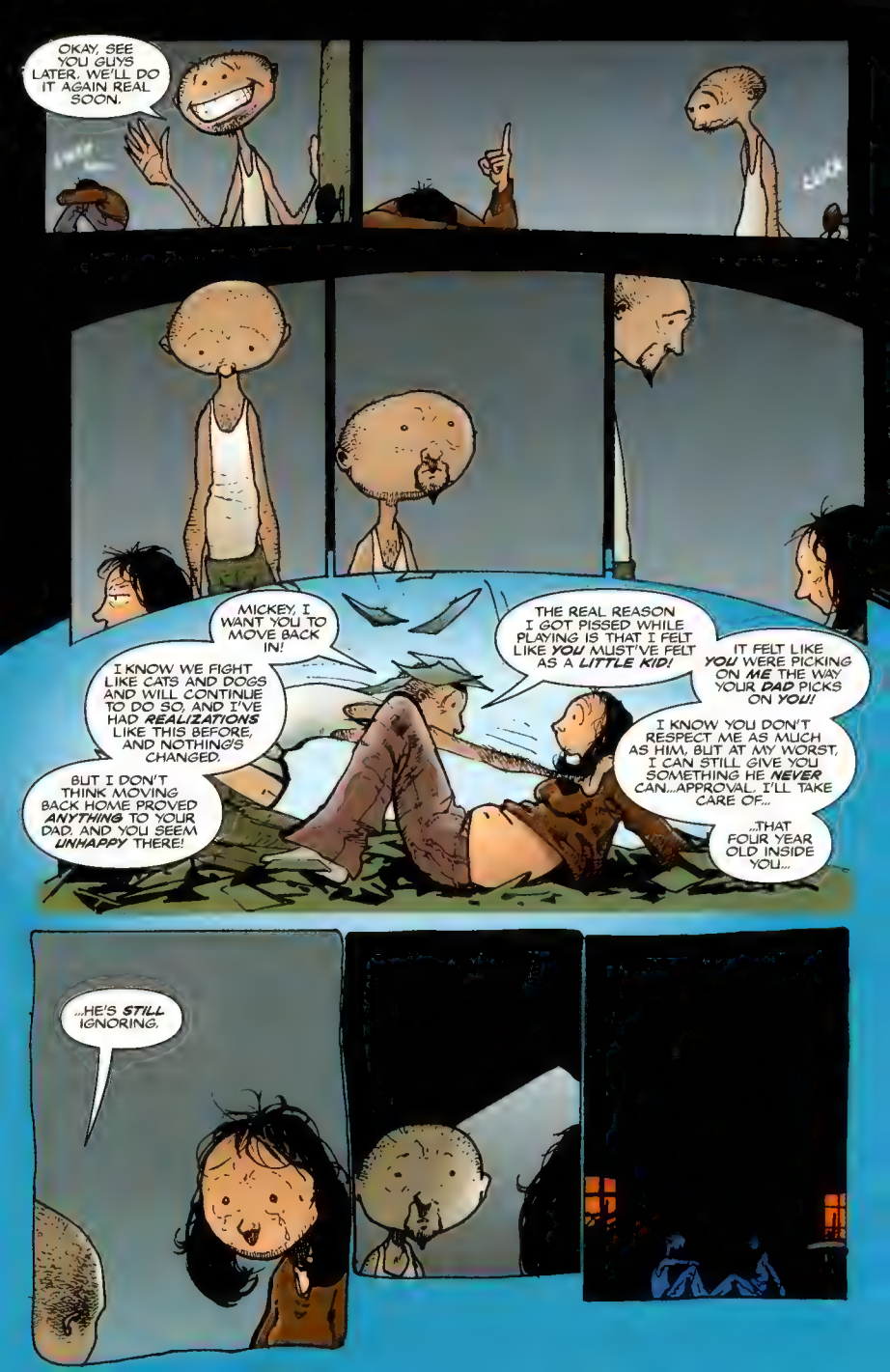

EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR "DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS". MINE WAS THE MOUNTING DRAWER FULL OF BILLS AND PAST DUE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS I'D TAKEN OVER AFTER MICKEY MOVED BACK HOME.
I WAS IN OVER MY HEAD BUT DIDN'T WANT TO FACE IT. WHAT KIND OF GUY CAN'T HANDLE MONEY?
IT WAS TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL...
...AND IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO HIDE IT FROM HER.
THIS MACHINE MUST BE BROKEN. I DON'T EVEN KNOW 28 PEOPLE.
A WHILE BACK I SAW MICKEY ACCIDENTALLY FLUSH AN EXPENSIVE PEN NIB DOWN THE TOILET. SHE THINKS I DON'T KNOW, BUT SHE FEELS SO GUILTY, SHE'S BEEN COUGHING UP FAVORS WHENEVER I BRING IT UP.
HEY! WHY AM I DOING YOUR LAUNDRY WHEN I DON'T EVEN LIVE HERE?
BECAUSE YOU WUV ME?
...UH HUH.
HEY! GET YOUR BUTT OFF THAT COUCH AND HELP ME, OKAY?
OKAY...BE THERE IN A SEC.
DUDE, SOMETHING HAPPENED. YOU NEVER MADE IT.
VERY FUNNY.
C'MON, DUDE, DON'T MAKE ME SOUND LIKE A BITCH. GET YOUR @$$ IN HERE!
SORRY, MICKEY. I WAS JUST DISTRACTED LOOKING FOR THAT PEN NIB AGAIN. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE FALLEN IN THE COUCH.
=SIGH=
TELL YOU WHAT, I'LL DO THE LAUNDRY TOMORROW IF YOU LET ME SLEEP OVER TONIGHT. HOW'S THAT SOUND?
GREAT!
SCORE!
SO...
CLICK
IF YOU THINK YOUR STUPID NIB IS WORTH A FREE BOINK...GUESS AGAIN, BUB.

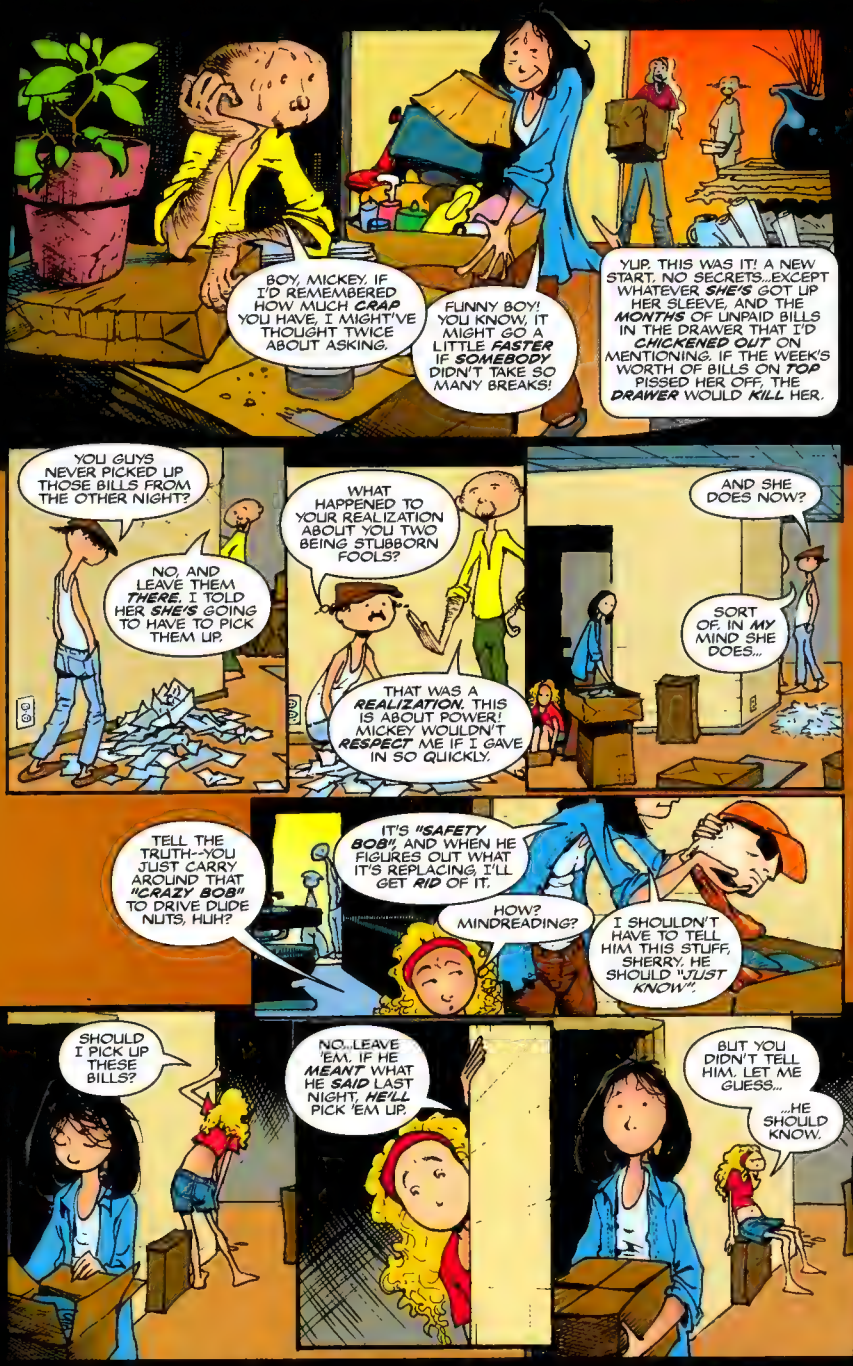
ALL I'M SAYING IS, I THOUGHT YOU MOVED BACK HOME SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH HIS CRAP. BUT IF YOU KEEP GOING OVER AND DOING LAUNDRY, YOU'RE BEING EXPLOITED! WHY BUY THE COW WHEN--
SHERRY, YOU AND TOM STILL UP FOR MONOPOLY TOMORROW WITH ME AND DUDE?
SURE.
I DON'T THINK DUDE'S GETTING ANY "FREE MILK".
BOTH OF YOU, BUTT OUT. I'M NOT EXPLOITED OR GIVING AWAY MILK.
I THINK YOUR MOVING IN WITH DAD IS A STEP BACKWARDS! I KNOW I COULDN'T STAND IT!
WHY DO YOU THINK I PRACTICALLY LIVE AT DUDE'S?
SO WHY'D YOU MOVE OUT?
I DUNNO. IT WAS DUDE'S LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT I FIRST LIKED. NOW IT'S WHAT DRIVES ME AWAY.
OH, WELL, I'M OFF. G'BYE!
SEE YA.
THANK GOD I MISSED DAD. IF I HAD TO SIT THROUGH ANOTHER LECTURE ABOUT BORROWING MONEY, I'D SCREAM.
DUDE'S NOT HOME YET. GOOD.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS! I CAN'T KEEP GOING BEHIND HIS BACK.
I FEEL SO SEEDY.
HELLO, MISS KOPELWITZ? IT'S MICKEY BOWLIN. YEAH, RIGHT. LISTEN, WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP TO LISTING THE HOUSE? YES, I'VE TALKED IT OVER AND HE'S FINE WITH ALL THIS...
I JUST REMEMBER HOW ADAMANT HE SOUNDED WHEN WE FIRST MET. THE PAPERS ARE IN HIS NAME, YOU KNOW.
LOOK, IF YOU'RE WORRIED, I CAN HAVE HIM COME TO THE PHONE RIGHT NOW. HE'S RIGHT--OH, SHOOT, HE JUST STEPPED INTO THE SHOWER.
AGAIN? HE MUST BE A PRUNE BY NOW. OKAY, IF YOU'RE SURE, I WON'T KEEP PRESSING.
MAYBE WHEN DUDE FINDS OUT, HE'LL BE SO MOVED AT THE LENGTHS I'VE GONE TO FOR LIS THAT HE WON'T BE ANGRY I'VE SOLD HIS HOUSE.
UH... RIGHT.

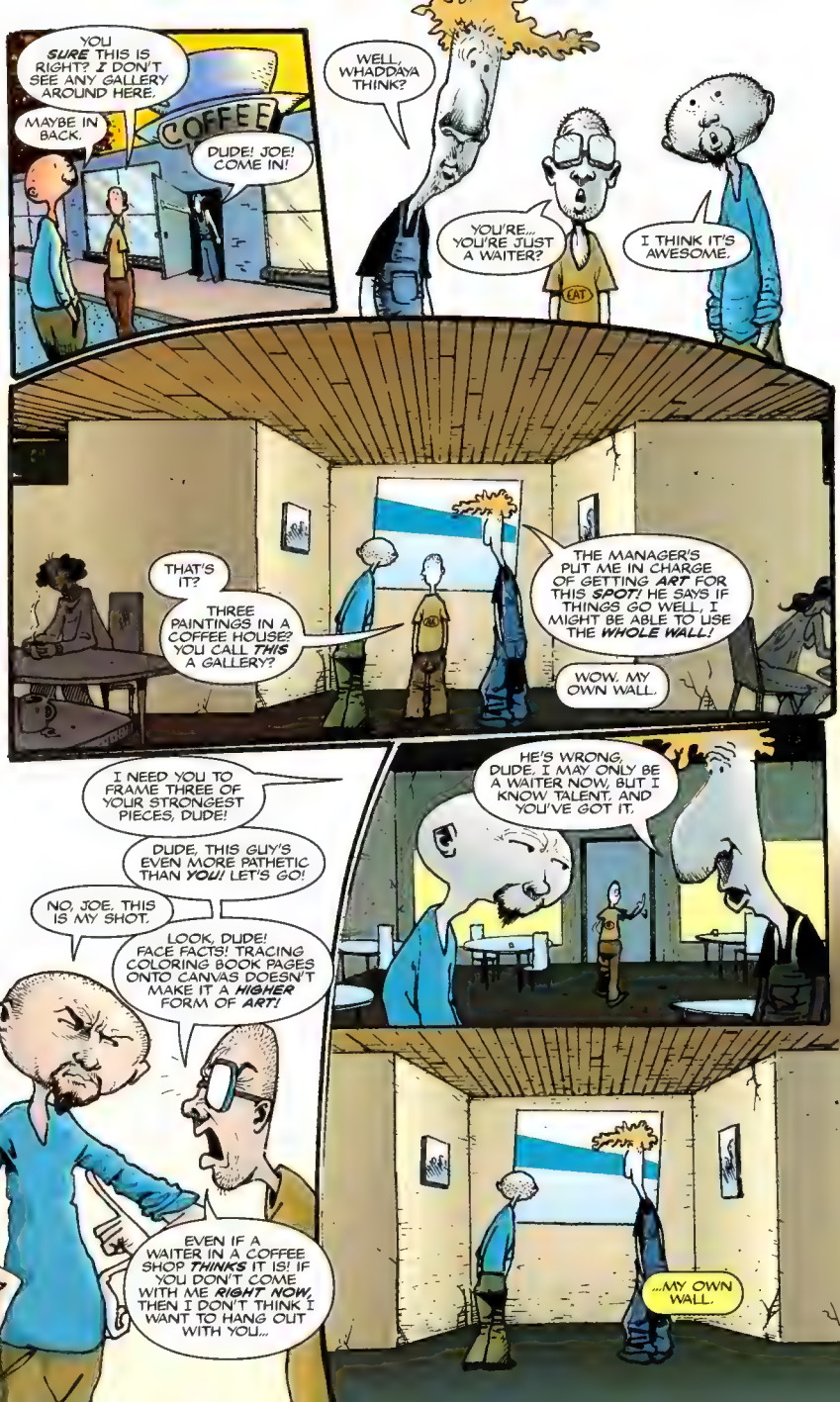

I HATE MONOPOLY. MY DAD TAUGHT ME TO PLAY AS A GIRL. HE'D GLOATINGLY WIN UNTIL HE PUSHED ME TO TEARS.
NOW I HATE IT BECAUSE I HAVE TO PRETEND I'M NOT GOOD JUST TO PROTECT DUDE'S FRAGILE MALE EGO.
I KNOW, STEVE'S THE SAME WAY.
MICKEY ALWAYS GETS THIS FUNNY LOOK WHEN WE PLAY MONOPOLY, LIKE SHE FEELS SORRY FOR ME.
BUT SCREW IT. I'M ACTUALLY A MUCH BETTER PLAYER THAN HER.
THAT'S SUCH CRAP! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WALK ON EGGSHELLS CAUSE HE CAN'T PLAY WELL. MANIPULATING MEN IS WHAT OUR MOMS DID.
YOU'RE RIGHT...BUT OUR WHOLE LIVES ARE ABOUT BOTH OF US TIPTOEING AROUND HIS INADEQUACIES.
I'M SICK OF IT. I TELL HER NOT TO PLACATE ME, BUT SHE DOESN'T LISTEN. I WANT A GIRLFRIEND, NOT A MOTHER.
I KNOW! AND ONCE YOU'RE VULNERABLE, THEY CONTROL YOU WITH THE ONE THING THEY KNOW WE MUST HAVE...
...REGULAR SEX?
MY DEFENSES ARE WAY TOO HIGH FOR EVEN INTIMACY, LET ALONE SEX. HOW DOES HE EXPECT ME TO LET DOWN AND BE CLOSE, WHEN NONE OF THE BIG ISSUES ARE RESOLVED, LIKE...
...SHE THINKS YOU'RE A MEAL TICKET?
WHY ELSE IS SHE ALWAYS AFTER ME TO SELL THE HOUSE? SHE'S TERRIFIED I'LL QUIT THE MALL, TRY TO SELL PAINTINGS, AND WE'LL STARVE! SHE'S SO PRACTICAL. IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT...
BUCKS. THAT'S ALL HE THINKS I WANT. BUT THE FACT THAT DUDE WON'T SELL HIS HOUSE IS A SYMBOL OF HOW HE CARES MORE ABOUT HIMSELF THAN ME. WE COULD START A NEW LIFE WITH THAT MONEY.
THE POINT IS...WE WERE BOTH PRETTY CLOSE TO WORKING ALL OF THIS OUT WHEN SHE CHICKENED OUT AND MOVED BACK HOME! AND SINCE THEN WE'VE JUST BEEN IN OPPOSITE CORNERS, TWO STUBBORN FOOLS!
YOU KNOW, I'M AS SICK OF ME PRETENDING AS DUDE IS! TONIGHT I'M GOING TO KICK HIS BUTT!
IS THAT WISE?
NO, BUT IT'S OVERDUE.
I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TEACH MICKEY A LESSON. I BET WE'D BOTH RELAX IF I'D JUST TAKE THE REINS AND SHOW HER WHO WEARS THE PANTS AROUND HERE.
BUT IS MONOPOLY THE BEST PLACE TO MAKE YOUR STAND?
BEATS REAL LIFE.
WE'RE BACK, WITH LOTS OF JUNKY FOOD AND BEER!
COOL.
OKAY, LET THE GAMES...

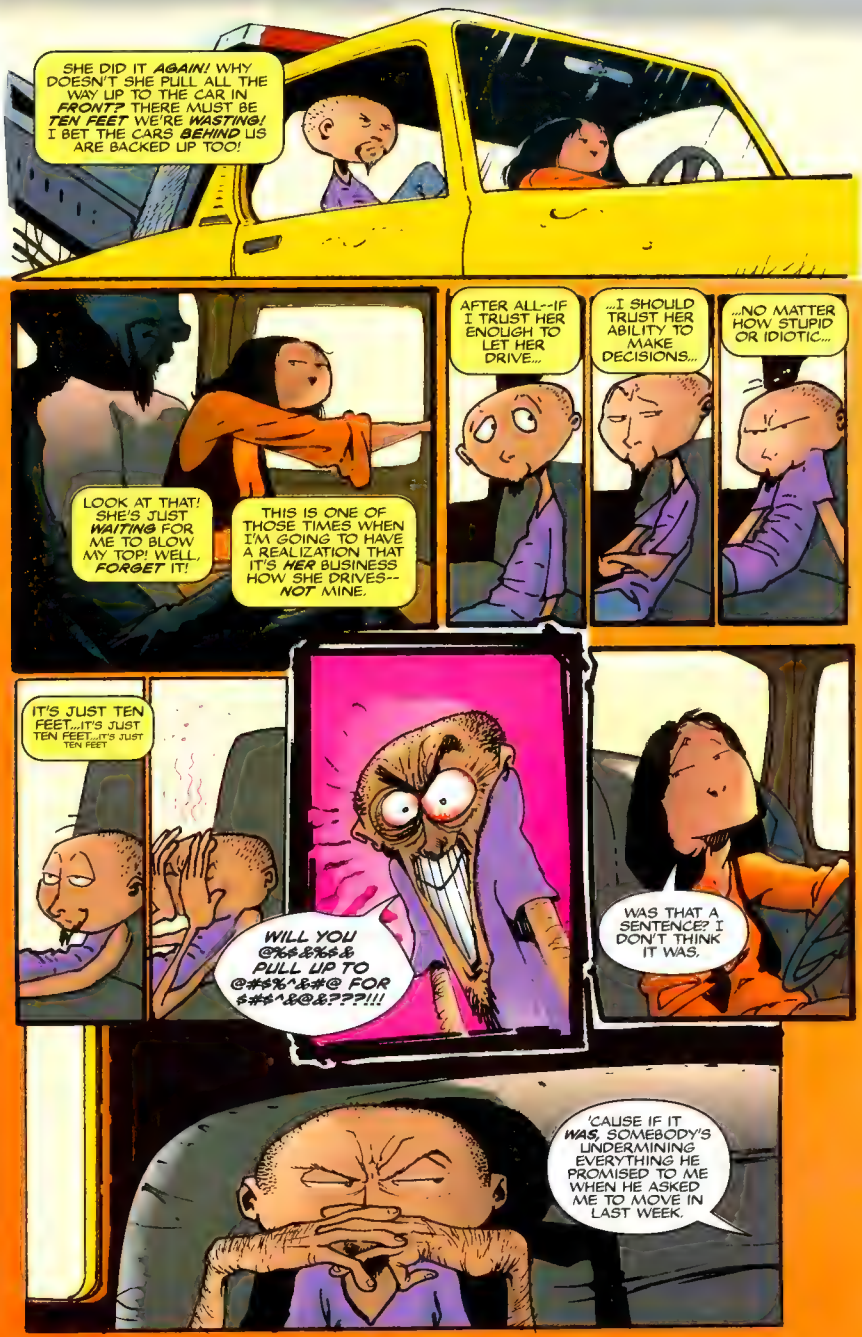

...BEGIN.
YOU KNOW, MONOPOLY IS POLARIZED INTO HALVES. THERE'S A MALE HALF AND A FEMALE HALF.
EXCUSE ME?
THINK ABOUT IT. EVERYBODY KNOWS IT'S TRUE. LIKE THE RAILROADS ARE OBVIOUSLY MALE.
WHAT'RE YOU, NUTS? WHERE DO YOU GET THIS HORSE@#!% FROM?! OKAY, WHAT ABOUT UTILITIES?
FEMALE! OBVIOUSLY, UTILITIES ARE FEMALE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTUALLY THAT STUPID. BUT THE MALE MIND NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE. YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT GONNA THROW A TANTRUM IF I START WINNING?
ME?! I'M JUST HONORED THAT THIS TIME YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY START PLAYING.
OKAY, WISE GUY, SHUT UP AND ROLL.
UH OH, SORRY, SNOOKS. I GOT THE RAILROAD. LOOKS LIKE WE KNOW WHO'S BOSS AROUND HERE.
THIS IS A REAL UGLY AND DESTRUCTIVE SIDE OF YOU, MICKEY. THE GLOATER.
SORRY.
NO YOU'RE NOT.
NO, I'M NOT.
SO ARE YOU GONNA BUY IT?
NO, UTILITIES ARE FOR GIRLS!
LOOK, IF YOU HADN'T USED UP ALL YOUR MONEY ON HOTELS, MAYBE YOU COULD BUY YOUR WAY OUT OF JAIL. I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS, BUT THIS IS GETTING UGLY. NOBODY THINKS YOU'RE A WIMP. LET'S JUST QUIT, OKAY?
NO! WE KEEP PLAYING! I DON'T NEED YOUR @#$&%#@ PITY!
WHY DO I KEEP LANDING ON YOUR @#%$&## UTILITIES?!
HEY, I'M NOT THE ONE THAT'S AFRAID TO BUY FEMALE PARTS OF THE BOARD...
YOU'RE GOOD AT GAMES, MICKEY, WHERE IT'S SAFE. YOU PLAY WITH YOUR "DOLLS" RUN HOME TO DADDY...
...BUT IN REAL LIFE, I THINK YOUR DAD HAS YOU PEGGED..
OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH---

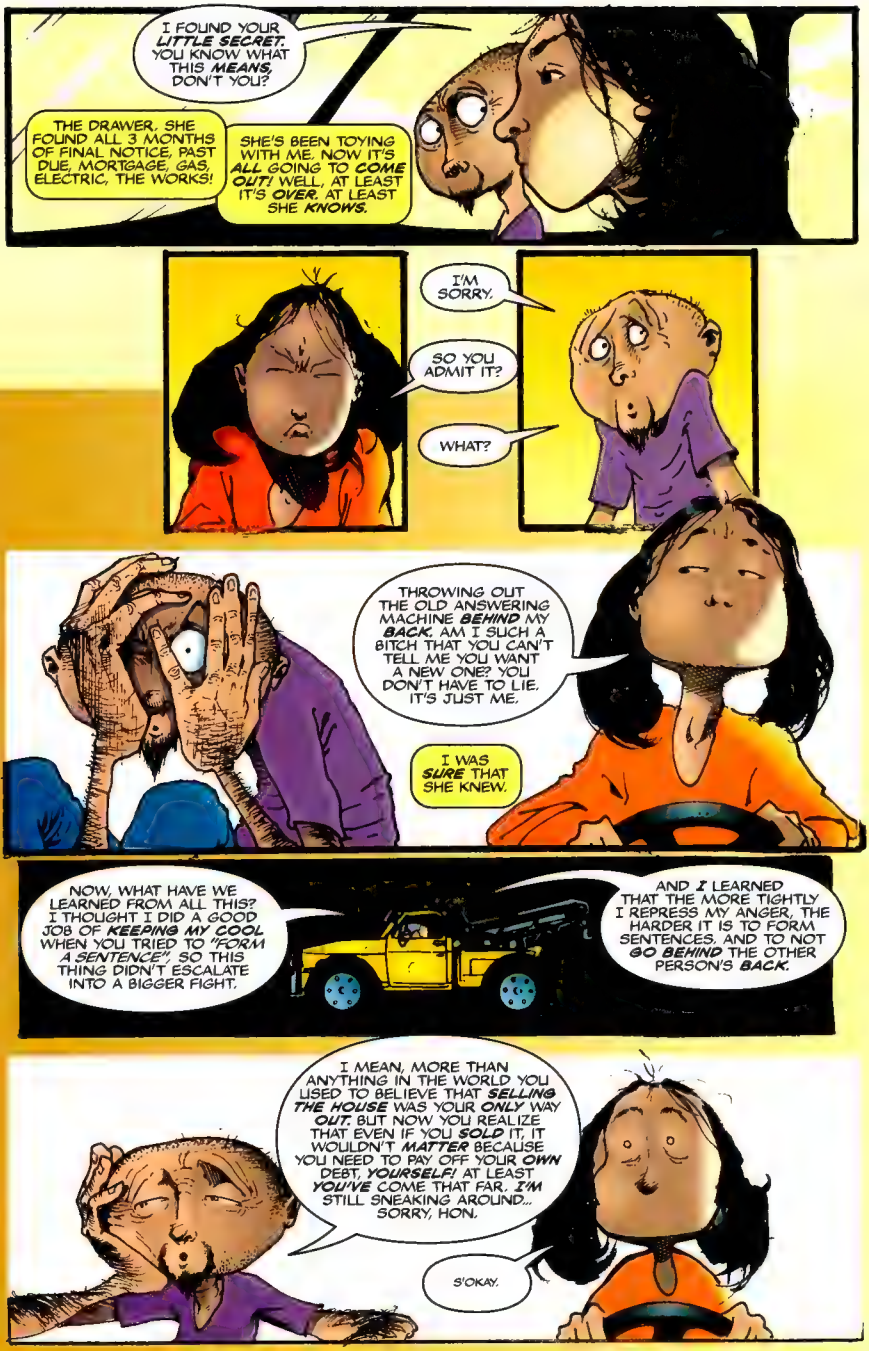
OKAY, WANNA TALK ABOUT REAL LIFE?
WHY DON'T WE START WITH THE HUGE STACK OF UNPAID BILLS YOU THINK IS SUCH A @#$% SECRET SITTING ON YOUR DESK? HUH?
I MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN TO PAY SOME BILLS, BUT YOU'RE PATHETIC, MICKEY. WITH EVERY ACTION YOU PROVE YOUR DAD WAS RIGHT. YOU'RE A LITTLE GIRL IN A GROWN WOMAN'S BODY.
LITTLE MICKEY MADE A MESS. MICKEY THE SCREWUP. DADDY'S LITTLE PIGLET.
FINE
PLOP!
IT'S OKAY, MICKEY. I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL...C'MON, LET'S...
WILL EVERYONE STOP TELLING ME HOW I FEEL?

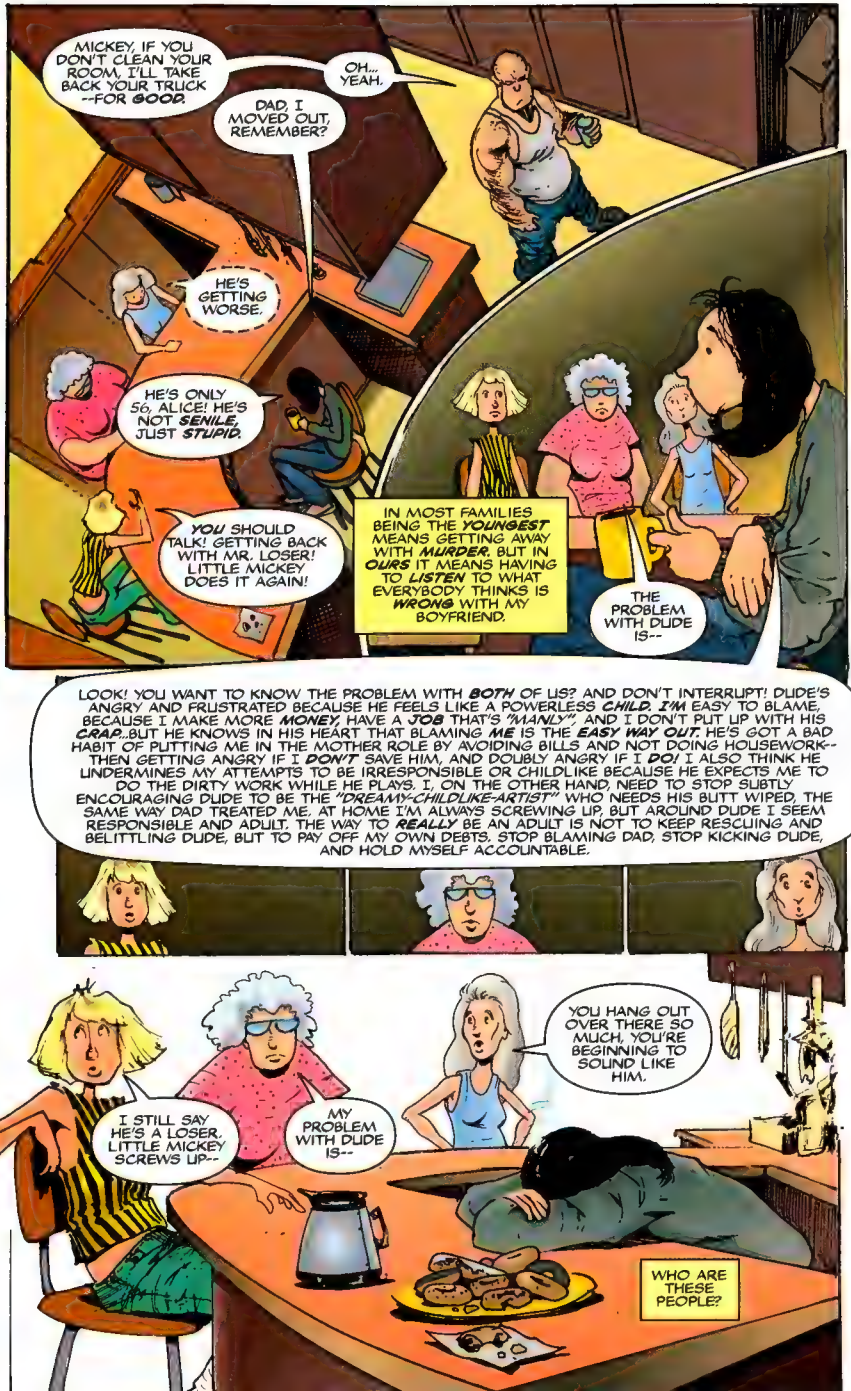

OKAY, SEE YOU GUYS LATER. WE'LL DO IT AGAIN REAL SOON.
MICKEY, I WANT YOU TO MOVE BACK IN!
I KNOW WE FIGHT LIKE CATS AND DOGS AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, AND I'VE HAD REALIZATIONS LIKE THIS BEFORE, AND NOTHING'S CHANGED.
BUT I DON'T THINK MOVING BACK HOME PROVED ANYTHING TO YOUR DAD, AND YOU SEEM UNHAPPY THERE!
THE REAL REASON I GOT PISSED WHILE PLAYING IS THAT I FELT LIKE YOU MUST'VE FELT AS A LITTLE KID!
IT FELT LIKE YOU WERE PICKING ON ME THE WAY YOUR DAD PICKS ON YOU!
I KNOW YOU DON'T RESPECT ME AS MUCH AS HIM, BUT AT MY WORST, I CAN STILL GIVE YOU SOMETHING HE NEVER CAN...APPROVAL. I'LL TAKE CARE OF...
...THAT FOUR YEAR OLD INSIDE YOU...
...HE'S STILL IGNORING.

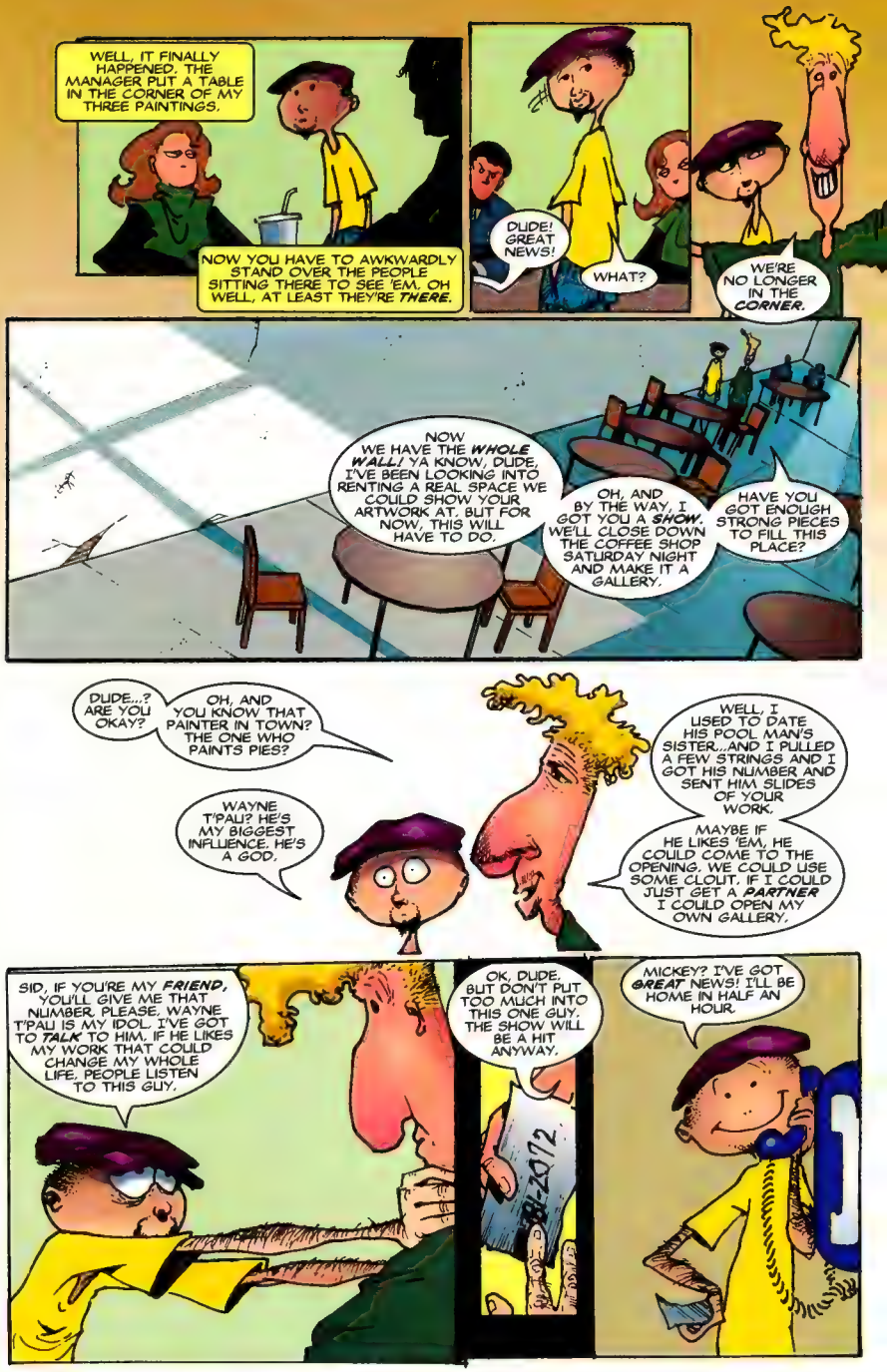

BOY, MICKEY. IF I'D REMEMBERED HOW MUCH CRAP YOU HAVE, I MIGHT'VE THOUGHT TWICE ABOUT ASKING.
FUNNY BOY! YOU KNOW, IT MIGHT GO A LITTLE FASTER IF SOMEBODY DIDN'T TAKE SO MANY BREAKS!
YUP. THIS WAS IT! A NEW START. NO SECRETS...EXCEPT WHATEVER SHE'S GOT UP HER SLEEVE, AND THE MONTHS OF UNPAID BILLS IN THE DRAWER THAT I'D CHICKENED OUT ON MENTIONING. IF THE WEEK'S WORTH OF BILLS ON TOP PISSED HER OFF, THE DRAWER WOULD KILL HER.
YOU GUYS NEVER PICKED UP THOSE BILLS FROM THE OTHER NIGHT?
NO, AND LEAVE THEM THERE. I TOLD HER SHE'S GOING TO HAVE TO PICK THEM UP.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR REALIZATION ABOUT YOU TWO BEING STUBBORN FOOLS?
THAT WAS A REALIZATION. THIS IS ABOUT POWER! MICKEY WOULDN'T RESPECT ME IF I GAVE IN SO QUICKLY.
AND SHE DOES NOW?
SORT OF. IN MY MIND SHE DOES...
TELL THE TRUTH--YOU JUST CARRY AROUND THAT "CRAZY BOB" TO DRIVE DUDE NUTS, HUH?
IT'S "SAFETY BOB", AND WHEN HE FIGURES OUT WHAT IT'S REPLACING, I'LL GET RID OF IT.
HOW? MINDREADING?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO TELL HIM THIS STUFF, SHERRY. HE SHOULD "JUST KNOW"!
SHOULD I PICK UP THESE BILLS?
NO...LEAVE 'EM. IF HE MEANT WHAT HE SAID LAST NIGHT, HE'LL PICK 'EM UP.
BUT YOU DIDN'T TELL HIM. LET ME GUESS...
...HE SHOULD KNOW.


YOU SURE THIS IS RIGHT? I DON'T SEE ANY GALLERY AROUND HERE.
MAYBE IN BACK.
COFFEE
DUDE! JOE! COME IN!
WELL, WHADDAYA THINK?
YOU'RE... YOU'RE JUST A WAITER?
I THINK IT'S AWESOME.
EAT
THAT'S IT?
THREE PAINTINGS IN A COFFEE HOUSE? YOU CALL THIS A GALLERY?
THE MANAGER'S PUT ME IN CHARGE OF GETTING ART FOR THIS SPOT! HE SAYS IF THINGS GO WELL, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE THE WHOLE WALL!
WOW. MY OWN WALL.
I NEED YOU TO FRAME THREE OF YOUR STRONGEST PIECES, DUDE!
DUDE, THIS GUY'S EVEN MORE PATHETIC THAN YOU! LET'S GO!
NO, JOE. THIS IS MY SHOT.
LOOK, DUDE! FACE FACTS! TRACING COLORING BOOK PAGES ONTO CANVAS DOESN'T MAKE IT A HIGHER FORM OF ART!
EVEN IF A WAITER IN A COFFEE SHOP THINKS IT IS! IF YOU DON'T COME WITH ME RIGHT NOW, THEN I DON'T THINK I WANT TO HANG OUT WITH YOU...
HE'S WRONG, DUDE. I MAY ONLY BE A WAITER NOW, BUT I KNOW TALENT. AND YOU'VE GOT IT.
...MY OWN WALL.


SHE DID IT AGAIN! WHY DOESN'T SHE PULL ALL THE WAY UP TO THE CAR IN FRONT? THERE MUST BE TEN FEET WE'RE WASTING! I BET THE CARS BEHIND US ARE BACKED UP TOO!
LOOK AT THAT! SHE'S JUST WAITING FOR ME TO BLOW MY TOP! WELL, FORGET IT!
THIS IS ONE OF THOSE TIMES WHEN I'M GOING TO HAVE A REALIZATION THAT IT'S HER BUSINESS HOW SHE DRIVES-- NOT MINE.
AFTER ALL--IF I TRUST HER ENOUGH TO LET HER DRIVE...
...I SHOULD TRUST HER ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS...
...NO MATTER HOW STUPID OR IDIOTIC...
IT'S JUST TEN FEET...IT'S JUST TEN FEET...IT'S JUST TEN FEET
WILL YOU @%$&%$& PULL UP TO @#$%^&#@ FOR $#$^&@&???!!!
WAS THAT A SENTENCE? I DON'T THINK IT WAS.
'CAUSE IF IT WAS, SOMEBODY'S UNDERMINING EVERYTHING HE PROMISED TO ME WHEN HE ASKED ME TO MOVE IN LAST WEEK.

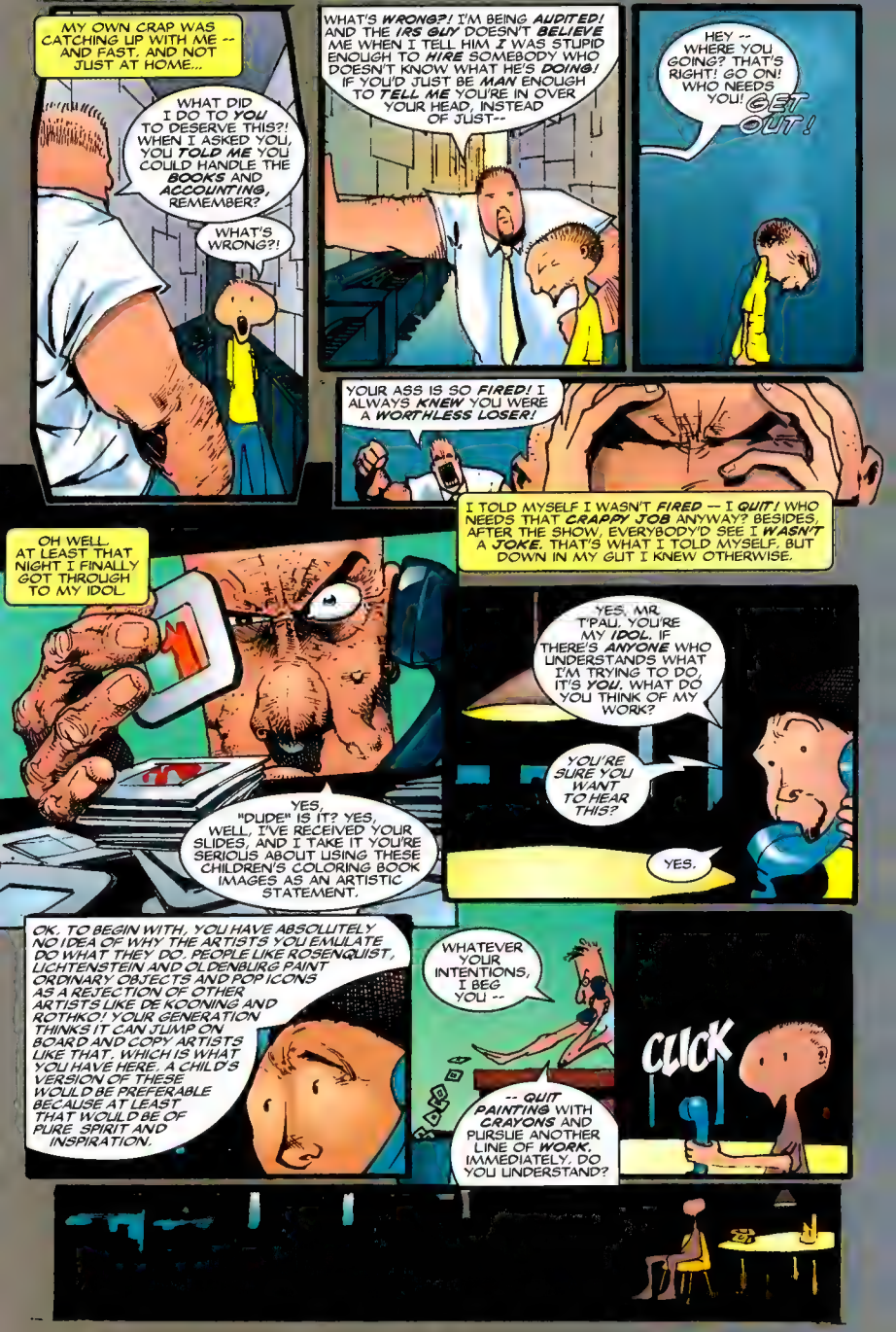

I FOUND YOUR *LITTLE SECRET*. YOU KNOW WHAT THIS *MEANS*, DON'T YOU?
THE DRAWER. SHE FOUND ALL 3 MONTHS OF FINAL NOTICE, PAST DUE, MORTGAGE, GAS, ELECTRIC, THE WORKS!
SHE'S BEEN TOYING WITH ME. NOW IT'S *ALL* GOING TO *COME OUT!* WELL, AT LEAST IT'S *OVER*. AT LEAST SHE *KNOWS*.
I'M SORRY.
SO YOU ADMIT IT?
WHAT?
THROWING OUT THE OLD ANSWERING MACHINE *BEHIND* MY *BACK*. AM I SUCH A BITCH THAT YOU CAN'T TELL ME YOU WANT A NEW ONE? YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIE. IT'S JUST ME.
I WAS *SURE* THAT SHE KNEW.
NOW, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM ALL THIS? I THOUGHT I DID A GOOD JOB OF *KEEPING MY COOL* WHEN YOU TRIED TO *"FORM A SENTENCE"*. SO THIS THING DIDN'T ESCALATE INTO A BIGGER FIGHT.
AND *I* LEARNED THAT THE MORE TIGHTLY I REPRESS MY ANGER, THE HARDER IT IS TO FORM SENTENCES, AND TO NOT *GO BEHIND* THE OTHER PERSON'S *BACK*.
I MEAN, MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD YOU USED TO BELIEVE THAT *SELLING THE HOUSE* WAS YOUR *ONLY* WAY *OUT*. BUT NOW YOU REALIZE THAT EVEN IF YOU *SOLD* IT, IT WOULDN'T *MATTER* BECAUSE YOU NEED TO PAY OFF YOUR *OWN* DEBT, *YOURSELF!* AT LEAST *YOU'VE* COME THAT FAR. *I'M* STILL SNEAKING AROUND... SORRY, HON.
S'OKAY.

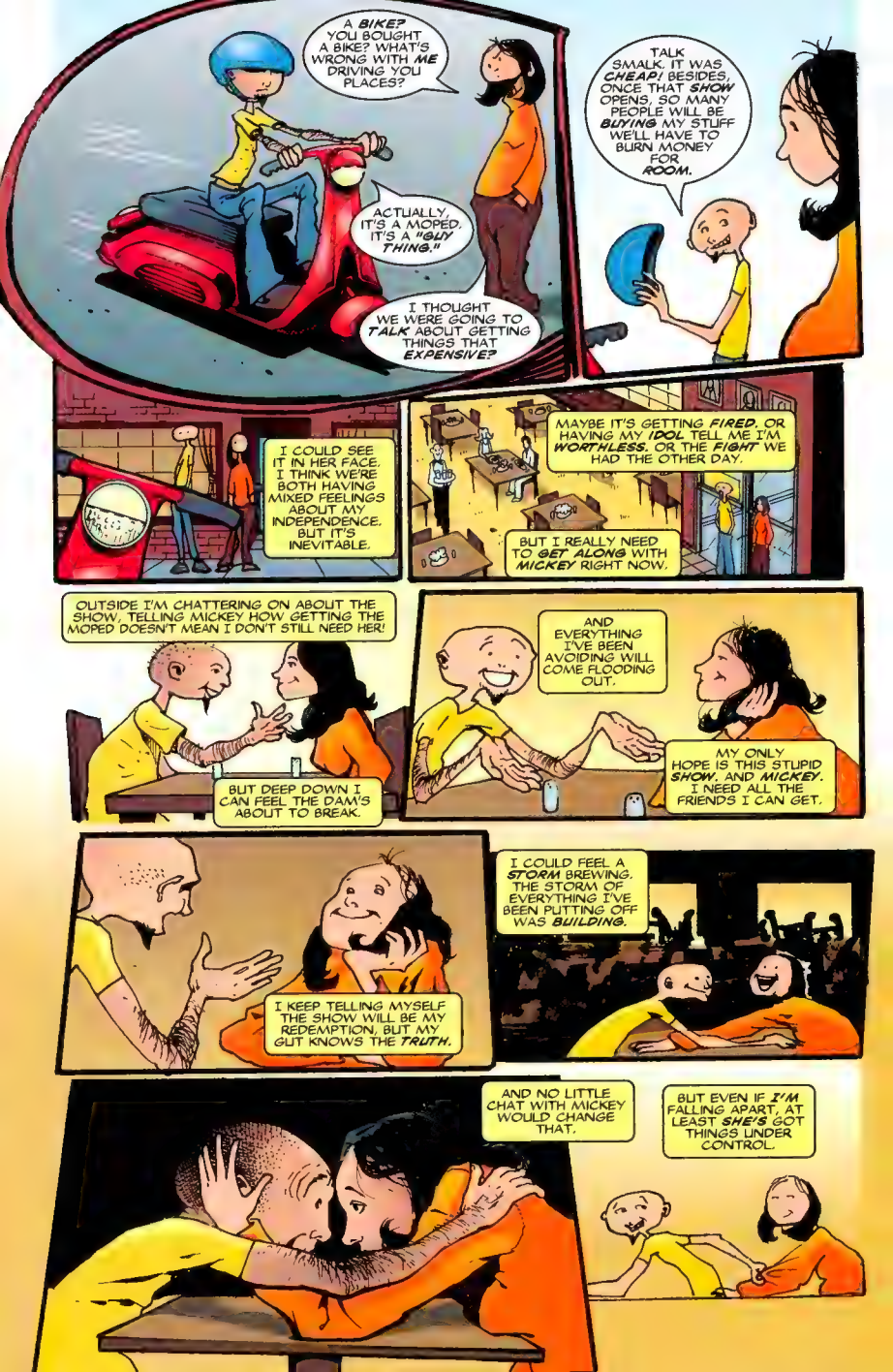

MICKEY, IF YOU DON'T CLEAN YOUR ROOM, I'LL TAKE BACK YOUR TRUCK --FOR GOOD.
OH... YEAH.
DAD, I MOVED OUT, REMEMBER?
HE'S GETTING WORSE.
HE'S ONLY 56, ALICE! HE'S NOT SENILE, JUST STUPID.
YOU SHOULD TALK! GETTING BACK WITH MR. LOSER! LITTLE MICKEY DOES IT AGAIN!
IN MOST FAMILIES BEING THE YOUNGEST MEANS GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER. BUT IN OURS IT MEANS HAVING TO LISTEN TO WHAT EVERYBODY THINKS IS WRONG WITH MY BOYFRIEND.
THE PROBLEM WITH DUDE IS--
LOOK! YOU WANT TO KNOW THE PROBLEM WITH BOTH OF US? AND DON'T INTERRUPT! DUDE'S ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED BECAUSE HE FEELS LIKE A POWERLESS CHILD. I'M EASY TO BLAME, BECAUSE I MAKE MORE MONEY, HAVE A JOB THAT'S "MANLY", AND I DON'T PUT UP WITH HIS CRAP..BUT HE KNOWS IN HIS HEART THAT BLAMING ME IS THE EASY WAY OUT. HE'S GOT A BAD HABIT OF PUTTING ME IN THE MOTHER ROLE BY AVOIDING BILLS AND NOT DOING HOUSEWORK-- THEN GETTING ANGRY IF I DON'T SAVE HIM, AND DOUBLY ANGRY IF I DO! I ALSO THINK HE UNDERMINES MY ATTEMPTS TO BE IRRESPONSIBLE OR CHILDLIKE BECAUSE HE EXPECTS ME TO DO THE DIRTY WORK WHILE HE PLAYS. I, ON THE OTHER HAND, NEED TO STOP SUBTLY ENCOURAGING DUDE TO BE THE "DREAMY-CHILDLIKE-ARTIST" WHO NEEDS HIS BUTT WIPED, THE SAME WAY DAD TREATED ME. AT HOME I'M ALWAYS SCREWING UP, BUT AROUND DUDE I SEEM RESPONSIBLE AND ADULT. THE WAY TO REALLY BE AN ADULT IS NOT TO KEEP RESCUING AND BELITTLING DUDE, BUT TO PAY OFF MY OWN DEBTS. STOP BLAMING DAD, STOP KICKING DUDE, AND HOLD MYSELF ACCOUNTABLE.
I STILL SAY HE'S A LOSER. LITTLE MICKEY SCREWS UP--
MY PROBLEM WITH DUDE IS--
YOU HANG OUT OVER THERE SO MUCH, YOU'RE BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE HIM.
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?


WELL, IT FINALLY HAPPENED. THE MANAGER PUT A TABLE IN THE CORNER OF MY THREE PAINTINGS.
NOW YOU HAVE TO AWKWARDLY STAND OVER THE PEOPLE SITTING THERE TO SEE 'EM. OH WELL, AT LEAST THEY'RE *THERE*.
DUDE! GREAT NEWS!
WHAT?
WE'RE NO LONGER IN THE *CORNER*.
NOW WE HAVE THE *WHOLE WALL!* YA KNOW, DUDE, I'VE BEEN LOOKING INTO RENTING A REAL SPACE WE COULD SHOW YOUR ARTWORK AT. BUT FOR NOW, THIS WILL HAVE TO DO.
OH, AND BY THE WAY, I GOT YOU A *SHOW*. WE'LL CLOSE DOWN THE COFFEE SHOP SATURDAY NIGHT AND MAKE IT A GALLERY.
HAVE YOU GOT ENOUGH STRONG PIECES TO FILL THIS PLACE?
DUDE...? ARE YOU OKAY?
OH, AND YOU KNOW THAT PAINTER IN TOWN? THE ONE WHO PAINTS PIES?
WAYNE T'PAU? HE'S MY BIGGEST INFLUENCE. HE'S A GOD.
WELL, I USED TO DATE HIS POOL MAN'S SISTER...AND I PULLED A FEW STRINGS AND I GOT HIS NUMBER AND SENT HIM SLIDES OF YOUR WORK.
MAYBE IF HE LIKES 'EM, HE COULD COME TO THE OPENING. WE COULD USE SOME CLOUT. IF I COULD JUST GET A *PARTNER* I COULD OPEN MY OWN GALLERY.
SID, IF YOU'RE MY *FRIEND*, YOU'LL GIVE ME THAT NUMBER, PLEASE. WAYNE T'PAU IS MY IDOL. I'VE GOT TO *TALK* TO HIM. IF HE LIKES MY WORK THAT COULD CHANGE MY WHOLE LIFE. PEOPLE LISTEN TO THIS GUY.
OK, DUDE. BUT DON'T PUT TOO MUCH INTO THIS ONE GUY. THE SHOW WILL BE A HIT ANYWAY.
BB-2072
MICKEY? I'VE GOT *GREAT* NEWS! I'LL BE HOME IN HALF AN HOUR.

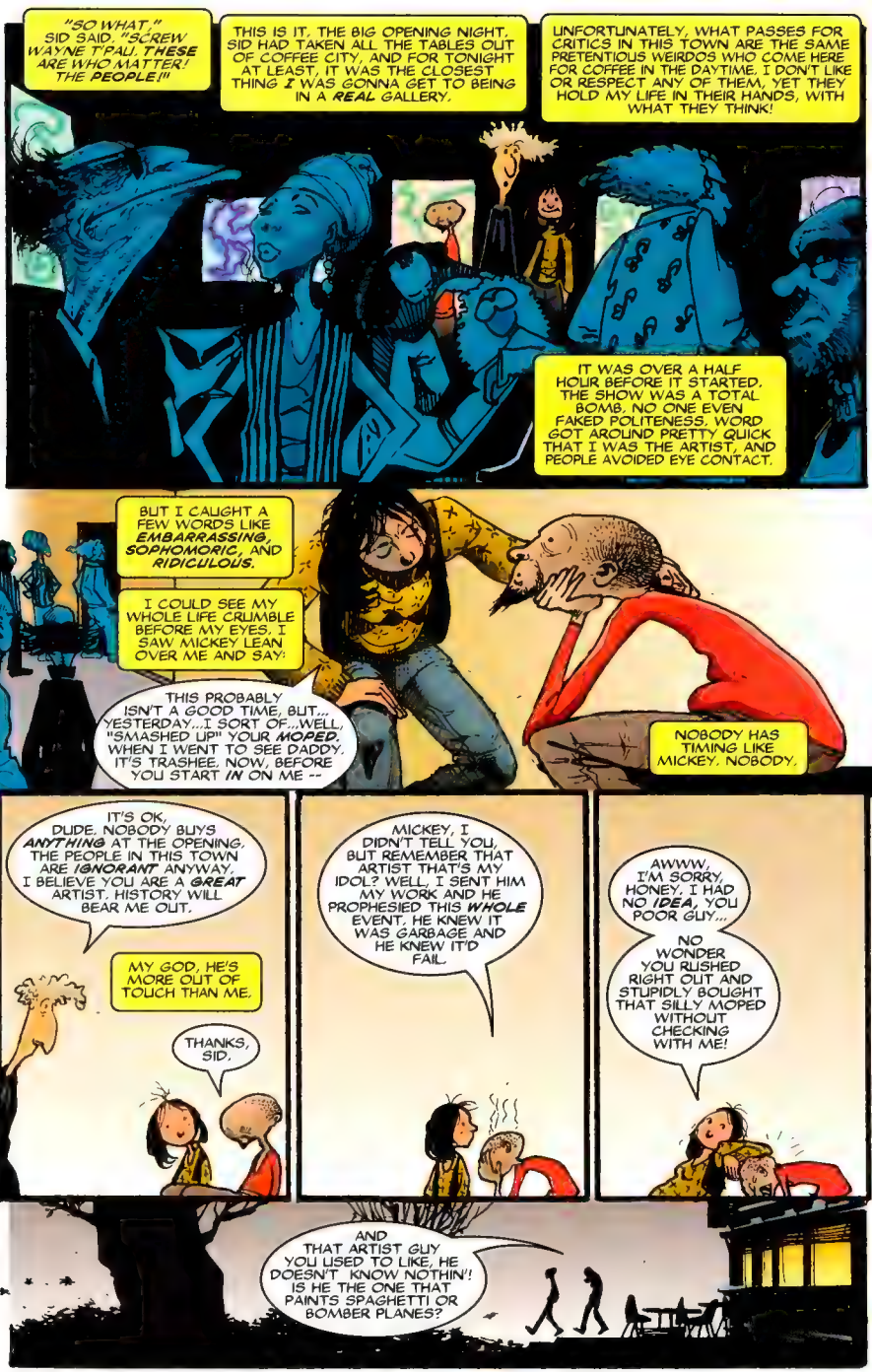
HI, HONEY! YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE--
JUST A SEC--I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF...
I GOT A SHOW! ISN'T THAT GREAT? THE MANAGER OF COFFEE CITY GAVE SID A WHOLE WALL!
IF I CAN COME UP WITH 20 PIECES AND FRAME 'EM, SID WILL KEEP 'EM UP FOR A WHOLE MONTH! COOL OR WHAT?! WANNA BOINK?
IT'S PARTY TIME!
SO WHAT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY SHOWS YOU GET WHEN YOU UNDERMINE IT ALL BY LYING TO ME, LEAVING ME STUCK WITH DAD'S OLD CRAPPY TRUCK, UP TO MY ASS IN DEBT.
OKAY... MAYBE NOT.
AS LONG AS OLD RELIABLE MICKEY'S THERE TO PICK UP THE PIECES WHEN YOU CRASH, RIGHT?
OH, AND BY THE WAY, I DUG THE "BROKEN" ANSWERING MACHINE OUT OF THE GARBAGE-- AND ALL 13 BILL COLLECTORS SAY "HELLO".
MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
LISTEN, I CAN EXPLAIN...
EVEN I DIDN'T BUY THAT ONE.
SLAM!
BOY, THAT SURE KILLED THE MOOD.

DUDE, ARE YOU AWAKE? LISTEN, I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO SLEEP OUT HERE.
WHEN I FOUND THOSE MESSAGES I OVERREACTED AND THOUGHT IT WAS THE TIP OF SOME IMAGINARY...ICEBERG.
IF YOU ONLY KNEW...
IF I ONLY KNEW YOU WERE TRYING TO PROTECT ME BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT I'D WORRY. I'M PROUD OF YOUR SHOW, REALLY. WANNA CLIMB ON MAMA FOR A FREE BOINK?
AFTER LAST NIGHT? I DON'T THINK SO...
I GOTTA GO. I'M TAKIN' THE TRUCK! BUT THIS ISN'T ABOUT MY BILLS OR YOUR DEBT!
I HAVE SOME SUCCESS, AND YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT. WELL, YOU'RE WRONG.
HA! SHOWED HER. I DIDN'T HAVE NOOKIE WITH HER.
HEY... WAIT A MINUTE...
BOY, TWO PEOPLE COULDN'T MISS MORE IF THEY TRIED. MAYBE HE'S RIGHT. MAY --
MICKEY? WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
MYSELF. MAY AS WELL BE. THE WAY ME AND DUDE GET ALONG. I FOUND OUT HE'S BEEN LYING ABOUT THE BILLS AGAIN.
WOW. WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO?
I DUNNO.
YOU COULD THREATEN TO LEAVE HIS LYIN' ASS.
SHERRY, REMEMBER THE HOUSE I'M TRYING TO SELL BEHIND HIS BACK?
OH, YEAH...THAT DOES TEND TO ERODE YOUR HIGH MORAL GROUND.
MAN, I'M AS BAD AS HIM.
PLOP
HOW MUCH LOWER CAN WE SINK?
YOU'RE YOUNG. GIVE IT TIME.

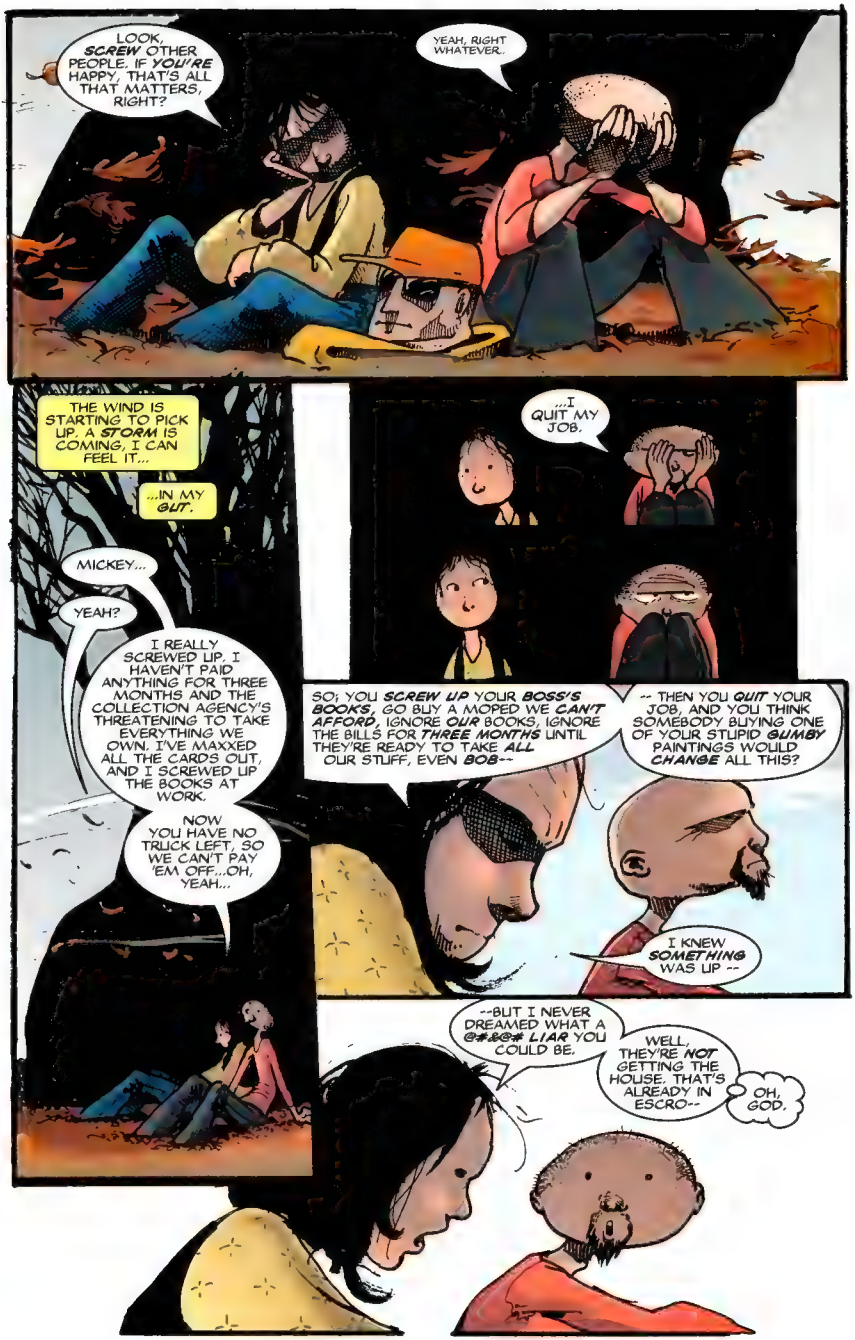

MY OWN CRAP WAS CATCHING UP WITH ME -- AND FAST. AND NOT JUST AT HOME...
WHAT DID I DO TO YOU TO DESERVE THIS?! WHEN I ASKED YOU, YOU TOLD ME YOU COULD HANDLE THE BOOKS AND ACCOUNTING, REMEMBER?
WHAT'S WRONG?!
WHAT'S WRONG?! I'M BEING AUDITED! AND THE IRS GUY DOESN'T BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL HIM I WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO HIRE SOMEBODY WHO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING! IF YOU'D JUST BE MAN ENOUGH TO TELL ME YOU'RE IN OVER YOUR HEAD, INSTEAD OF JUST--
HEY -- WHERE YOU GOING? THAT'S RIGHT! GO ON! WHO NEEDS YOU! GET OUT!
YOUR ASS IS SO FIRED! I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE A WORTHLESS LOSER!
I TOLD MYSELF I WASN'T FIRED -- I QUIT! WHO NEEDS THAT CRAPPY JOB ANYWAY? BESIDES, AFTER THE SHOW, EVERYBODY'D SEE I WASN'T A JOKE. THAT'S WHAT I TOLD MYSELF. BUT DOWN IN MY GUT I KNEW OTHERWISE.
OH WELL. AT LEAST THAT NIGHT I FINALLY GOT THROUGH TO MY IDOL.
YES, "DUDE" IS IT? YES. WELL, I'VE RECEIVED YOUR SLIDES, AND I TAKE IT YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT USING THESE CHILDREN'S COLORING BOOK IMAGES AS AN ARTISTIC STATEMENT.
YES, MR. T'PAU. YOU'RE MY IDOL. IF THERE'S ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO, IT'S YOU. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY WORK?
YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO HEAR THIS?
YES.
OK. TO BEGIN WITH, YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA OF WHY THE ARTISTS YOU EMULATE DO WHAT THEY DO. PEOPLE LIKE ROSENQUIST, LICHTENSTEIN AND OLDENBURG PAINT ORDINARY OBJECTS AND POP ICONS AS A REFLECTION OF OTHER ARTISTS LIKE DE KOONING AND ROTHKO! YOUR GENERATION THINKS IT CAN JUMP ON BOARD AND COPY ARTISTS LIKE THAT. WHICH IS WHAT YOU HAVE HERE. A CHILD'S VERSION OF THESE WOULD BE PREFERABLE BECAUSE AT LEAST THAT WOULD BE OF PURE SPIRIT AND INSPIRATION.
WHATEVER YOUR INTENTIONS, I BEG YOU --
-- QUIT PAINTING WITH CRAYONS AND PURSUE ANOTHER LINE OF WORK. IMMEDIATELY. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
CLICK

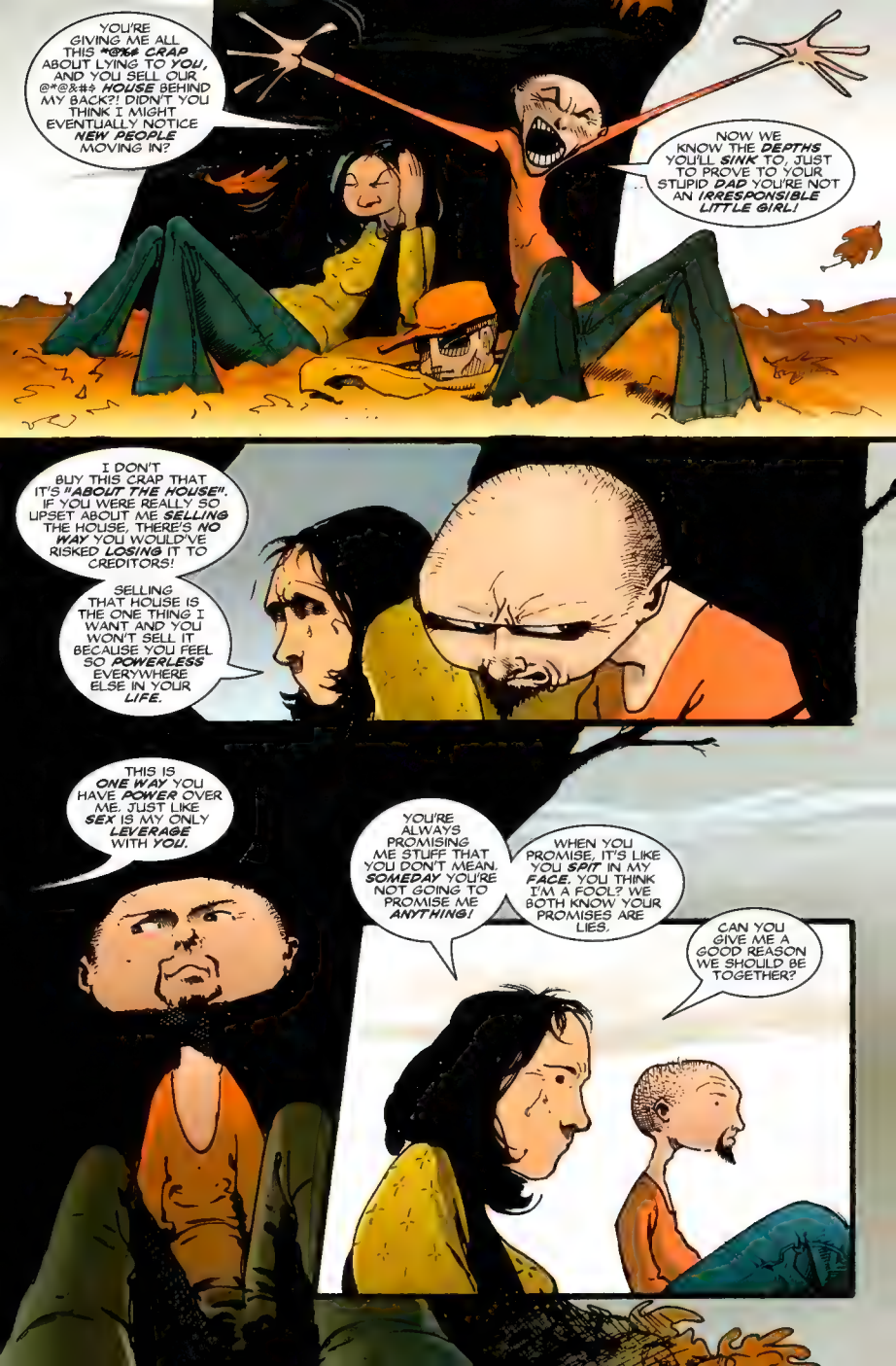

A BIKE? YOU BOUGHT A BIKE? WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME DRIVING YOU PLACES?
ACTUALLY, IT'S A MOPED. IT'S A "GUY THING."
I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO TALK ABOUT GETTING THINGS THAT EXPENSIVE?
TALK SMALK. IT WAS CHEAP! BESIDES, ONCE THAT SHOW OPENS, SO MANY PEOPLE WILL BE BUYING MY STUFF WE'LL HAVE TO BURN MONEY FOR ROOM.
I COULD SEE IT IN HER FACE. I THINK WE'RE BOTH HAVING MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT MY INDEPENDENCE. BUT IT'S INEVITABLE.
MAYBE IT'S GETTING FIRED. OR HAVING MY IDOL TELL ME I'M WORTHLESS. OR THE FIGHT WE HAD THE OTHER DAY.
BUT I REALLY NEED TO GET ALONG WITH MICKEY RIGHT NOW.
OUTSIDE I'M CHATTERING ON ABOUT THE SHOW, TELLING MICKEY HOW GETTING THE MOPED DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T STILL NEED HER!
BUT DEEP DOWN I CAN FEEL THE DAM'S ABOUT TO BREAK.
AND EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN AVOIDING WILL COME FLOODING OUT.
MY ONLY HOPE IS THIS STUPID SHOW, AND MICKEY. I NEED ALL THE FRIENDS I CAN GET.
I KEEP TELLING MYSELF THE SHOW WILL BE MY REDEMPTION, BUT MY GUT KNOWS THE TRUTH.
I COULD FEEL A STORM BREWING. THE STORM OF EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN PUTTING OFF WAS BUILDING.
AND NO LITTLE CHAT WITH MICKEY WOULD CHANGE THAT.
BUT EVEN IF I'M FALLING APART, AT LEAST SHE'S GOT THINGS UNDER CONTROL.

MY TRUCK! SOME %#*@ STOLE MY TRUCK OUTTA THE GARAGE!
POLICE? I WANNA REPORT A STOL --
IS THIS MICKEY?
UH... YEAH, BUT --
THIS ABOUT THE "STOLEN TRUCK" AGAIN?
...YEAH.
CLICK
DADDY TOOK MY TRUCK BACK--
-- JUST TO PUNISH ME FOR MOVING BACK WITH YOU.
I'M THROUGH LOOKING LIKE A FOOL!
DAD! WE GOTTA TALK! IF YOU WANNA TREAT ME LIKE GARBAGE OR DISAPPROVE OF ME AND DUDE LIVING TOGETHER--OKAY.
BUT YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE AWAY MY ABILITY TO MAKE MONEY.
I'M NOT. YOU CAN GET ANOTHER JOB.
YOU DON'T GET IT! YOU WOULDN'T DO THIS TO THE OTHER DRIVERS. I'M AN ADULT AND I WANT SOME RESPECT.
YOU'LL GET IT WHEN YOU STOP MOVING BACK HOME WHENEVER LIFE DOESN'T GO YOUR WAY...
...AND PAY ME BACK MY TWENTY GRAND!
THAT'S LOW. YOU WOULDN'T HUMILIATE ONE OF YOUR DRIVERS IF HE OWED YOU MONEY.
NO, I'D TAKE HIM TO COURT.
THAT'S TREATING YOU LIKE AN ADULT.
BUT IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, DADDY. IT MIGHT TAKE YEARS TO PAY IT ALL BACK.
WHEN YOU START PAYING ME BACK, YOU'LL GET YOUR TRUCK BACK.
RESPECT IS EARNED, MICKEY, NOT GIVEN.
SLAM!
@#%&

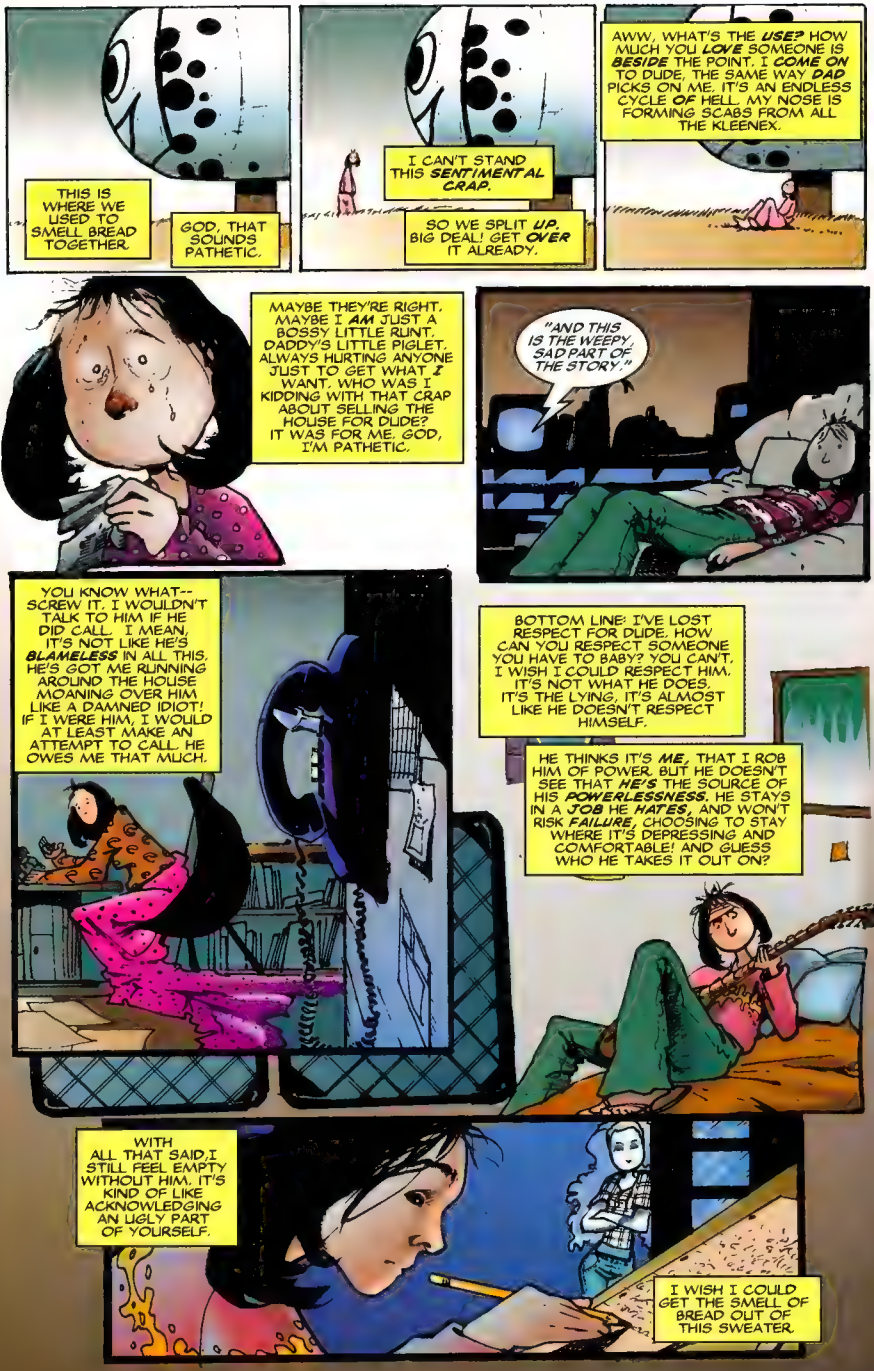

"SO WHAT," SID SAID. "SCREW WAYNE T'PAU. THESE ARE WHO MATTER! THE PEOPLE!"
THIS IS IT. THE BIG OPENING NIGHT. SID HAD TAKEN ALL THE TABLES OUT OF COFFEE CITY, AND FOR TONIGHT AT LEAST, IT WAS THE CLOSEST THING I WAS GONNA GET TO BEING IN A REAL GALLERY.
UNFORTUNATELY, WHAT PASSES FOR CRITICS IN THIS TOWN ARE THE SAME PRETENTIOUS WEIRDOS WHO COME HERE FOR COFFEE IN THE DAYTIME. I DON'T LIKE OR RESPECT ANY OF THEM, YET THEY HOLD MY LIFE IN THEIR HANDS, WITH WHAT THEY THINK!
IT WAS OVER A HALF HOUR BEFORE IT STARTED. THE SHOW WAS A TOTAL BOMB. NO ONE EVEN FAKED POLITENESS. WORD GOT AROUND PRETTY QUICK THAT I WAS THE ARTIST, AND PEOPLE AVOIDED EYE CONTACT.
BUT I CAUGHT A FEW WORDS LIKE EMBARRASSING, SOPHOMORIC, AND RIDICULOUS.
I COULD SEE MY WHOLE LIFE CRUMBLE BEFORE MY EYES. I SAW MICKEY LEAN OVER ME AND SAY:
THIS PROBABLY ISN'T A GOOD TIME, BUT... YESTERDAY... I SORT OF... WELL, "SMASHED UP" YOUR MOPED, WHEN I WENT TO SEE DADDY. IT'S TRASHEE, NOW, BEFORE YOU START IN ON ME --
NOBODY HAS TIMING LIKE MICKEY. NOBODY.
IT'S OK, DUDE. NOBODY BUYS ANYTHING AT THE OPENING. THE PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN ARE IGNORANT ANYWAY. I BELIEVE YOU ARE A GREAT ARTIST. HISTORY WILL BEAR ME OUT.
MY GOD, HE'S MORE OUT OF TOUCH THAN ME.
THANKS, SID.
MICKEY, I DIDN'T TELL YOU, BUT REMEMBER THAT ARTIST THAT'S MY IDOL? WELL, I SENT HIM MY WORK AND HE PROPHESIED THIS WHOLE EVENT. HE KNEW IT WAS GARBAGE AND HE KNEW IT'D FAIL.
AWWW, I'M SORRY, HONEY. I HAD NO IDEA, YOU POOR GUY...
NO WONDER YOU RUSHED RIGHT OUT AND STUPIDLY BOUGHT THAT SILLY MOPED WITHOUT CHECKING WITH ME!
AND THAT ARTIST GUY YOU USED TO LIKE, HE DOESN'T KNOW NOTHIN'! IS HE THE ONE THAT PAINTS SPAGHETTI OR BOMBER PLANES?

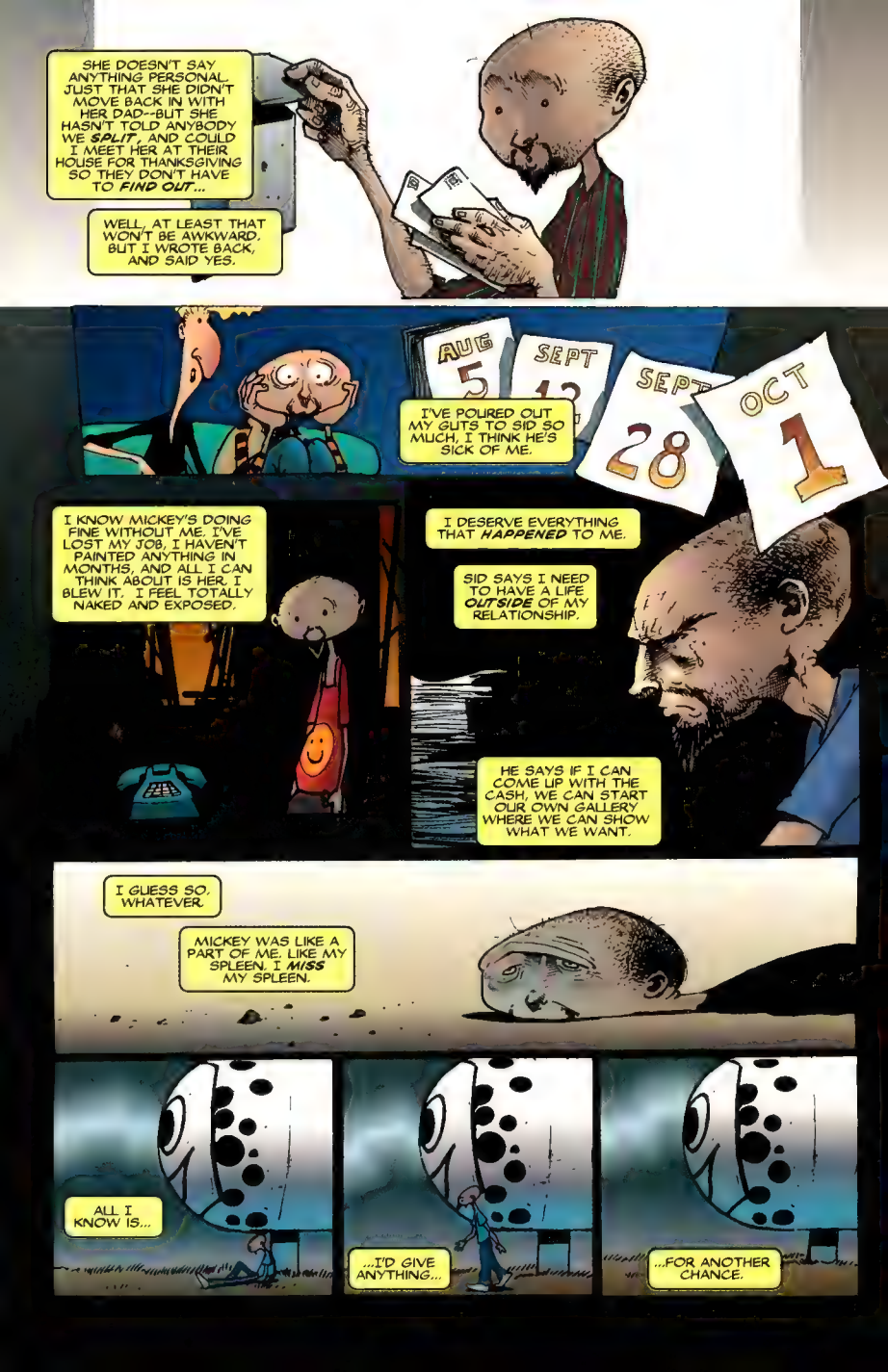
LOOK DUDE, I LOVE YOU, AND I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU KEEP GETTING HURT. SO I'M GOING TO ASK A REALLY BRUTAL QUESTION.
WHY DO YOU INSIST ON PAINTING IN THIS CHILDISHLY STUPID STYLE?
YOU REALLY BELIEVE IT'S STUPID?
SIGH
WHAT DO I KNOW?
I JUST WISH EVERYONE ELSE DIDN'T THINK SO. IF YOU COULD JUST FIND ONE OTHER GUY WHO DOESN'T THINK IT'S NUTS.
HOW ABOUT SID?
LOOK-- I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ART-- MAYBE YOU ARE GREAT. IT'S JUST PAINFUL FOR BOTH OF US TO SEE YOU CREATE SOMETHING THAT NOBODY WANTS TO LOOK AT.
WHY DO YOU CLING TO THIS ONE WAY OF MAKING A LIVING AND BEING RESPECTED -- WHEN NO ONE ELSE RESPECTS IT? WHY CRAYONS? COULDN'T IT BE OILS OR ACYRLICS OR EVEN WATERCOLORS?
I DON'T KNOW. EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE KID, THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT CRAYONS -- THE SMELL WHEN YOU OPEN A FRESH BOX -- THE SECRET LITTLE SHARPENER IN THE BACK.
I KNEW, IF I COULD JUST FIND A WAY FOR OTHER PEOPLE TO RESPECT THIS AS A FORM OF ART, THEN IT WOULD VALIDATE MY WHOLE LIFE. I WOULDN'T BE JUST SOME FREAK WHO COLORED, BUT A GUY WHO FOLLOWED PICASSO, WHO SAID--
I KNOW, I KNOW, YOU'VE TOLD ME A THOUSAND TIMES.
--WHO SAID--"IT TOOK ME MY WHOLE LIFE TO LEARN TO DRAW AS A CHILD."

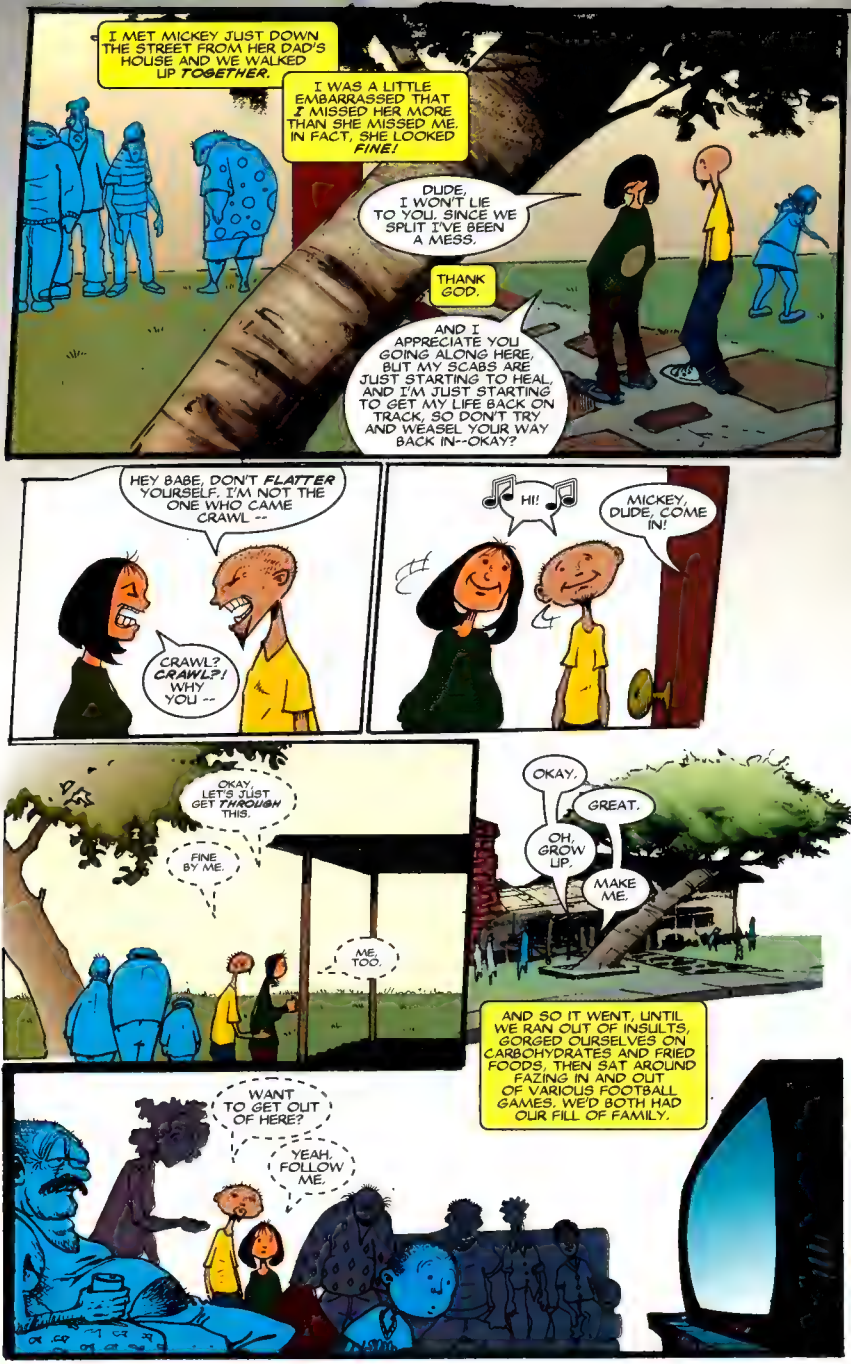

LOOK, SCREW OTHER PEOPLE. IF YOU'RE HAPPY, THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS, RIGHT?
YEAH, RIGHT WHATEVER.
THE WIND IS STARTING TO PICK UP. A STORM IS COMING, I CAN FEEL IT...
...IN MY GUT.
MICKEY...
YEAH?
I REALLY SCREWED UP. I HAVEN'T PAID ANYTHING FOR THREE MONTHS AND THE COLLECTION AGENCY'S THREATENING TO TAKE EVERYTHING WE OWN. I'VE MAXXED ALL THE CARDS OUT, AND I SCREWED UP THE BOOKS AT WORK.
NOW YOU HAVE NO TRUCK LEFT, SO WE CAN'T PAY 'EM OFF...OH, YEAH...
...I QUIT MY JOB.
SO; YOU SCREW UP YOUR BOSS'S BOOKS, GO BUY A MOPED WE CAN'T AFFORD, IGNORE OUR BOOKS, IGNORE THE BILLS FOR THREE MONTHS UNTIL THEY'RE READY TO TAKE ALL OUR STUFF, EVEN BOB--
-- THEN YOU QUIT YOUR JOB, AND YOU THINK SOMEBODY BUYING ONE OF YOUR STUPID GUMBY PAINTINGS WOULD CHANGE ALL THIS?
I KNEW SOMETHING WAS UP --
--BUT I NEVER DREAMED WHAT A @*&$# LIAR YOU COULD BE.
WELL, THEY'RE NOT GETTING THE HOUSE. THAT'S ALREADY IN ESCRO--
OH, GOD.


YOU'RE GIVING ME ALL THIS *@&# CRAP ABOUT LYING TO YOU, AND YOU SELL OUR @*@&#$ HOUSE BEHIND MY BACK?! DIDN'T YOU THINK I MIGHT EVENTUALLY NOTICE NEW PEOPLE MOVING IN?
NOW WE KNOW THE DEPTHS YOU'LL SINK TO, JUST TO PROVE TO YOUR STUPID DAD YOU'RE NOT AN IRRESPONSIBLE LITTLE GIRL!
I DON'T BUY THIS CRAP THAT IT'S "ABOUT THE HOUSE". IF YOU WERE REALLY SO UPSET ABOUT ME SELLING THE HOUSE, THERE'S NO WAY YOU WOULD'VE RISKED LOSING IT TO CREDITORS!
SELLING THAT HOUSE IS THE ONE THING I WANT AND YOU WON'T SELL IT BECAUSE YOU FEEL SO POWERLESS EVERYWHERE ELSE IN YOUR LIFE.
THIS IS ONE WAY YOU HAVE POWER OVER ME. JUST LIKE SEX IS MY ONLY LEVERAGE WITH YOU.
YOU'RE ALWAYS PROMISING ME STUFF THAT YOU DON'T MEAN. SOMEDAY YOU'RE NOT GOING TO PROMISE ME ANYTHING!
WHEN YOU PROMISE, IT'S LIKE YOU SPIT IN MY FACE. YOU THINK I'M A FOOL? WE BOTH KNOW YOUR PROMISES ARE LIES.
CAN YOU GIVE ME A GOOD REASON WE SHOULD BE TOGETHER?

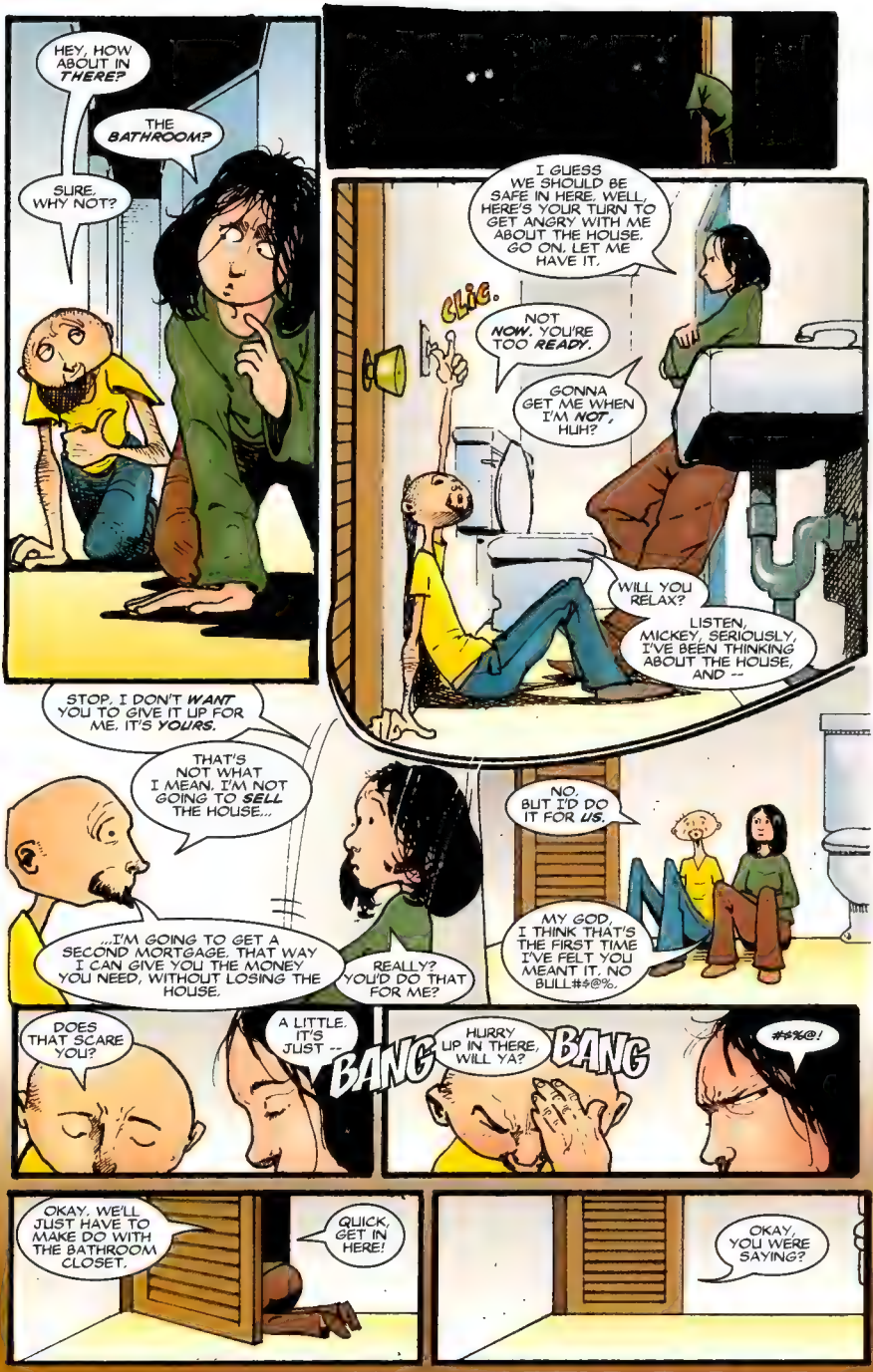
WELL.. THERE'S THE ANSWER.
I'LL BE BY TO PICK UP MY STUFF TOMORROW.
FINE.
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

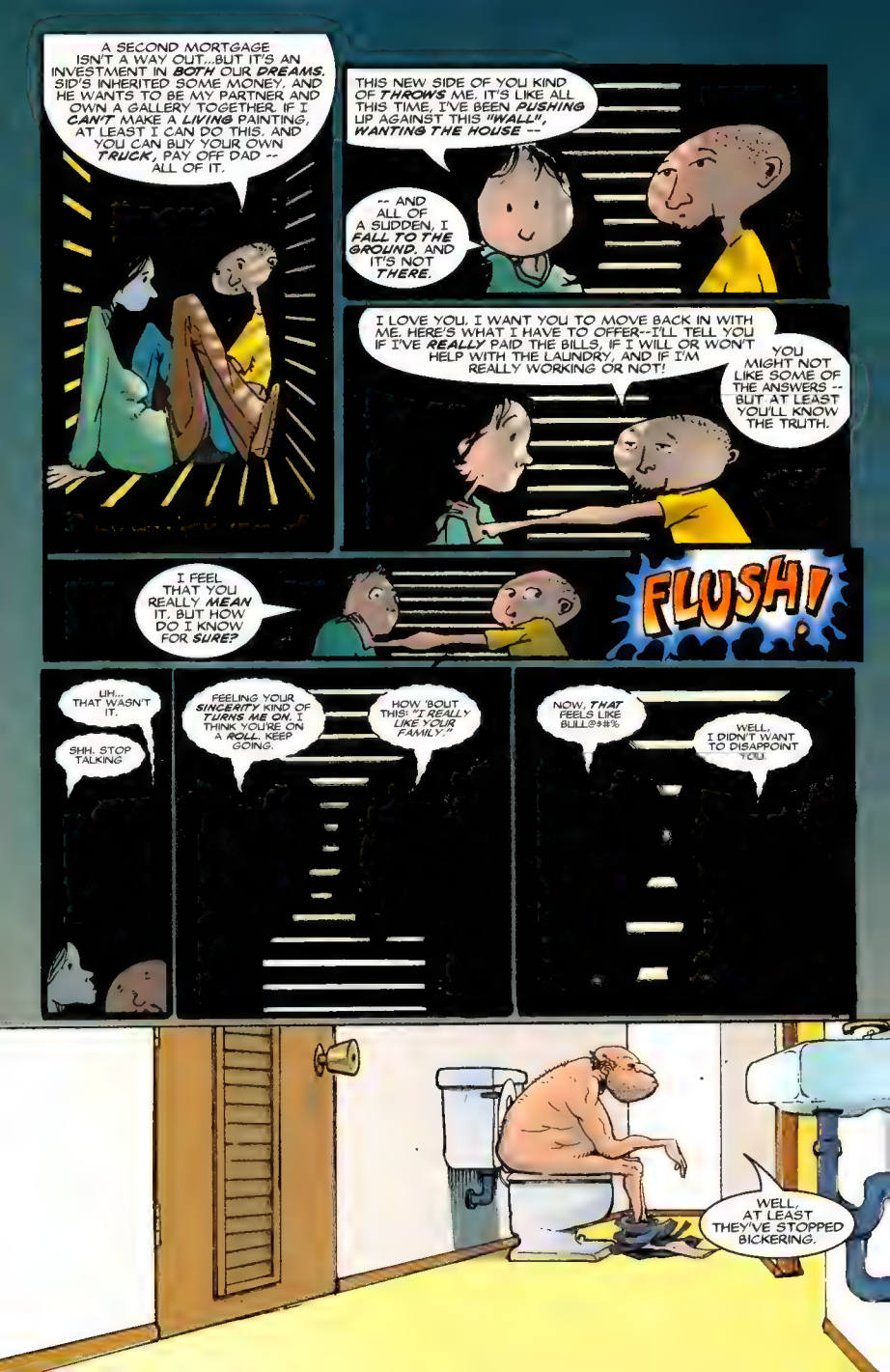

THIS IS WHERE WE USED TO SMELL BREAD TOGETHER.
GOD, THAT SOUNDS PATHETIC.
I CAN'T STAND THIS SENTIMENTAL CRAP.
SO WE SPLIT UP. BIG DEAL! GET OVER IT ALREADY.
AWW, WHAT'S THE USE? HOW MUCH YOU LOVE SOMEONE IS BESIDE THE POINT. I COME ON TO DUDE, THE SAME WAY DAD PICKS ON ME. IT'S AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF HELL. MY NOSE IS FORMING SCABS FROM ALL THE KLEENEX.
MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT. MAYBE I AM JUST A BOSSY LITTLE RUNT. DADDY'S LITTLE PIGLET. ALWAYS HURTING ANYONE JUST TO GET WHAT I WANT. WHO WAS I KIDDING WITH THAT CRAP ABOUT SELLING THE HOUSE FOR DUDE? IT WAS FOR ME. GOD, I'M PATHETIC.
"AND THIS IS THE WEEPY, SAD PART OF THE STORY."
YOU KNOW WHAT-- SCREW IT. I WOULDN'T TALK TO HIM IF HE DID CALL. I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S BLAMELESS IN ALL THIS. HE'S GOT ME RUNNING AROUND THE HOUSE MOANING OVER HIM LIKE A DAMNED IDIOT! IF I WERE HIM, I WOULD AT LEAST MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO CALL. HE OWES ME THAT MUCH.
BOTTOM LINE: I'VE LOST RESPECT FOR DUDE. HOW CAN YOU RESPECT SOMEONE YOU HAVE TO BABY? YOU CAN'T. I WISH I COULD RESPECT HIM. IT'S NOT WHAT HE DOES. IT'S THE LYING, IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE DOESN'T RESPECT HIMSELF.
HE THINKS IT'S ME, THAT I ROB HIM OF POWER. BUT HE DOESN'T SEE THAT HE'S THE SOURCE OF HIS POWERLESSNESS. HE STAYS IN A JOB HE HATES, AND WON'T RISK FAILURE, CHOOSING TO STAY WHERE IT'S DEPRESSING AND COMFORTABLE! AND GUESS WHO HE TAKES IT OUT ON?
WITH ALL THAT SAID, I STILL FEEL EMPTY WITHOUT HIM. IT'S KIND OF LIKE ACKNOWLEDGING AN UGLY PART OF YOURSELF.
I WISH I COULD GET THE SMELL OF BREAD OUT OF THIS SWEATER.


SHE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING PERSONAL. JUST THAT SHE DIDN'T MOVE BACK IN WITH HER DAD--BUT SHE HASN'T TOLD ANYBODY WE SPLIT, AND COULD I MEET HER AT THEIR HOUSE FOR THANKSGIVING SO THEY DON'T HAVE TO FIND OUT...
WELL, AT LEAST THAT WON'T BE AWKWARD. BUT I WROTE BACK, AND SAID YES.
AUG 5
SEPT
SEPT 28
OCT 1
I'VE POURED OUT MY GUTS TO SID SO MUCH, I THINK HE'S SICK OF ME.
I KNOW MICKEY'S DOING FINE WITHOUT ME. I'VE LOST MY JOB, I HAVEN'T PAINTED ANYTHING IN MONTHS, AND ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS HER. I BLEW IT. I FEEL TOTALLY NAKED AND EXPOSED.
I DESERVE EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO ME.
SID SAYS I NEED TO HAVE A LIFE OUTSIDE OF MY RELATIONSHIP.
HE SAYS IF I CAN COME UP WITH THE CASH, WE CAN START OUR OWN GALLERY WHERE WE CAN SHOW WHAT WE WANT.
I GUESS SO, WHATEVER.
MICKEY WAS LIKE A PART OF ME. LIKE MY SPLEEN. I MISS MY SPLEEN.
ALL I KNOW IS...
...I'D GIVE ANYTHING...
...FOR ANOTHER CHANCE.


I MET MICKEY JUST DOWN THE STREET FROM HER DAD'S HOUSE AND WE WALKED UP TOGETHER.
I WAS A LITTLE EMBARRASSED THAT I MISSED HER MORE THAN SHE MISSED ME. IN FACT, SHE LOOKED FINE!
DUDE, I WON'T LIE TO YOU. SINCE WE SPLIT I'VE BEEN A MESS.
THANK GOD.
AND I APPRECIATE YOU GOING ALONG HERE, BUT MY SCABS ARE JUST STARTING TO HEAL, AND I'M JUST STARTING TO GET MY LIFE BACK ON TRACK, SO DON'T TRY AND WEASEL YOUR WAY BACK IN--OKAY?
HEY BABE, DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF. I'M NOT THE ONE WHO CAME CRAWL --
CRAWL? CRAWL?! WHY YOU --
HI!
MICKEY, DUDE, COME IN!
OKAY. LET'S JUST GET THROUGH THIS.
FINE BY ME.
ME, TOO.
OKAY.
GREAT.
OH, GROW UP.
MAKE ME.
AND SO IT WENT, UNTIL WE RAN OUT OF INSULTS, GORGED OURSELVES ON CARBOHYDRATES AND FRIED FOODS, THEN SAT AROUND FAZING IN AND OUT OF VARIOUS FOOTBALL GAMES. WE'D BOTH HAD OUR FILL OF FAMILY.
WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE?
YEAH. FOLLOW ME.

THERE'S GOT TO BE ONE ROOM THAT'S NOT CRAWLING WITH RELATIVES.
TRY THERE.
COOL! YOU'VE GOT ME ALL TO YOURSELF!
LUCKY ME.
C'MON, MICKEY. THE KITCHEN'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO GET AWAY FROM EVERYONE, SPILL OUR GUTS ABOUT HOW SORRY WE ARE, AND HOW MUCH WE REALLY MISS EACH OTHER, THEN EAT A BUNCH OF ICE CREAM.
OH, SO WE'RE SUPPOSED TO LIE. WELL, YOU'RE THE EXPERT THERE, BUB.
OR MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE A PROMISE...
WHUMP
...YOU CAN BREAK!
SCREW IT. LET'S JUST CUT TO THE ICE CREAM.
HEY, I'VE STILL GOT REASONS TO BE PISSED AT YOU, TOO, YOU KNOW.
YEAH, BUT WE'RE NOT DONE WITH ME YET...
DID YOU SEE 'EM? I THINK THEY'RE IN THE KITCHEN.
SHHH
NOW WE'RE BEING HUNTED.
GO THAT WAY. MAYBE IF WE KEEP LOW, WE'LL MAKE IT OUT WITH OUR HIDES INTACT. REMEMBER THE DONNER PARTY?
THEY'RE GONNA EAT US, TOO?
WITH MY FAMILY, YOU NEVER KNOW...


HEY, HOW ABOUT IN THERE?
THE BATHROOM?
SURE, WHY NOT?
I GUESS WE SHOULD BE SAFE IN HERE. WELL, HERE'S YOUR TURN TO GET ANGRY WITH ME ABOUT THE HOUSE. GO ON. LET ME HAVE IT.
CLICK.
NOT NOW. YOU'RE TOO READY.
GONNA GET ME WHEN I'M NOT, HUH?
WILL YOU RELAX?
LISTEN, MICKEY, SERIOUSLY, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE HOUSE, AND --
STOP. I DON'T WANT YOU TO GIVE IT UP FOR ME. IT'S YOURS.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN. I'M NOT GOING TO SELL THE HOUSE...
NO, BUT I'D DO IT FOR US.
...I'M GOING TO GET A SECOND MORTGAGE. THAT WAY I CAN GIVE YOU THE MONEY YOU NEED, WITHOUT LOSING THE HOUSE.
REALLY? YOU'D DO THAT FOR ME?
MY GOD, I THINK THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE FELT YOU MEANT IT. NO BULL#$@%.
DOES THAT SCARE YOU?
A LITTLE. IT'S JUST --
BANG
HURRY UP IN THERE, WILL YA?
BANG
#*%@!
OKAY. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH THE BATHROOM CLOSET.
QUICK, GET IN HERE!
OKAY, YOU WERE SAYING?

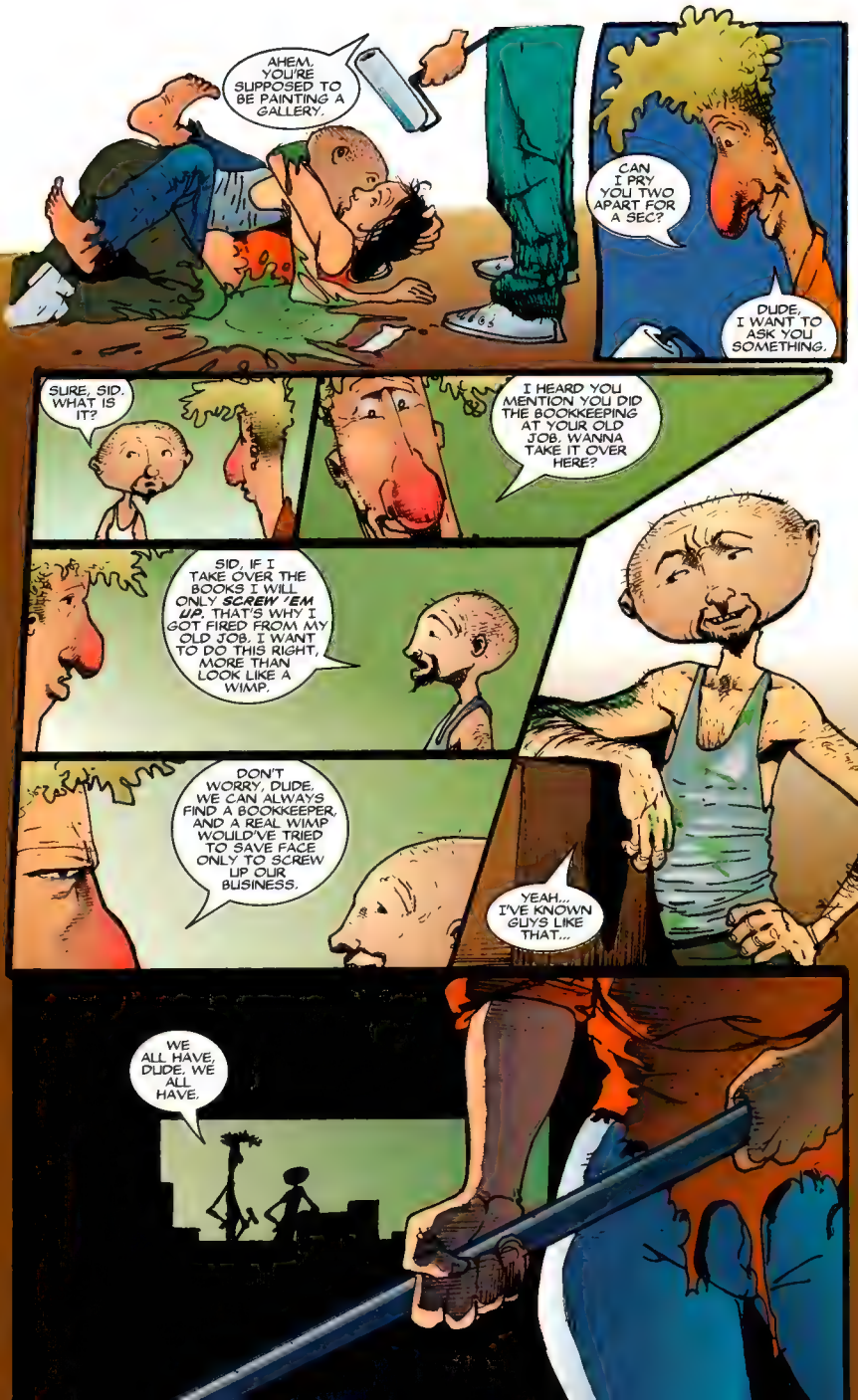

A SECOND MORTGAGE ISN'T A WAY OUT...BUT IT'S AN INVESTMENT IN BOTH OUR DREAMS. SID'S INHERITED SOME MONEY, AND HE WANTS TO BE MY PARTNER AND OWN A GALLERY TOGETHER. IF I CAN'T MAKE A LIVING PAINTING, AT LEAST I CAN DO THIS. AND YOU CAN BUY YOUR OWN TRUCK, PAY OFF DAD -- ALL OF IT.
THIS NEW SIDE OF YOU KIND OF THROWS ME. IT'S LIKE ALL THIS TIME, I'VE BEEN PUSHING UP AGAINST THIS "WALL", WANTING THE HOUSE --
-- AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, I FALL TO THE GROUND, AND IT'S NOT THERE.
I LOVE YOU. I WANT YOU TO MOVE BACK IN WITH ME. HERE'S WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER--I'LL TELL YOU IF I'VE REALLY PAID THE BILLS, IF I WILL OR WON'T HELP WITH THE LAUNDRY, AND IF I'M REALLY WORKING OR NOT!
YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE SOME OF THE ANSWERS -- BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL KNOW THE TRUTH.
I FEEL THAT YOU REALLY MEAN IT. BUT HOW DO I KNOW FOR SURE?
FLUSH!
UH... THAT WASN'T IT.
SHH. STOP TALKING
FEELING YOUR SINCERITY KIND OF TURNS ME ON. I THINK YOU'RE ON A ROLL. KEEP GOING.
HOW 'BOUT THIS: "I REALLY LIKE YOUR FAMILY."
NOW, THAT FEELS LIKE BULL@#%
WELL, I DIDN'T WANT TO DISAPPOINT YOU.
WELL, AT LEAST THEY'VE STOPPED BICKERING.

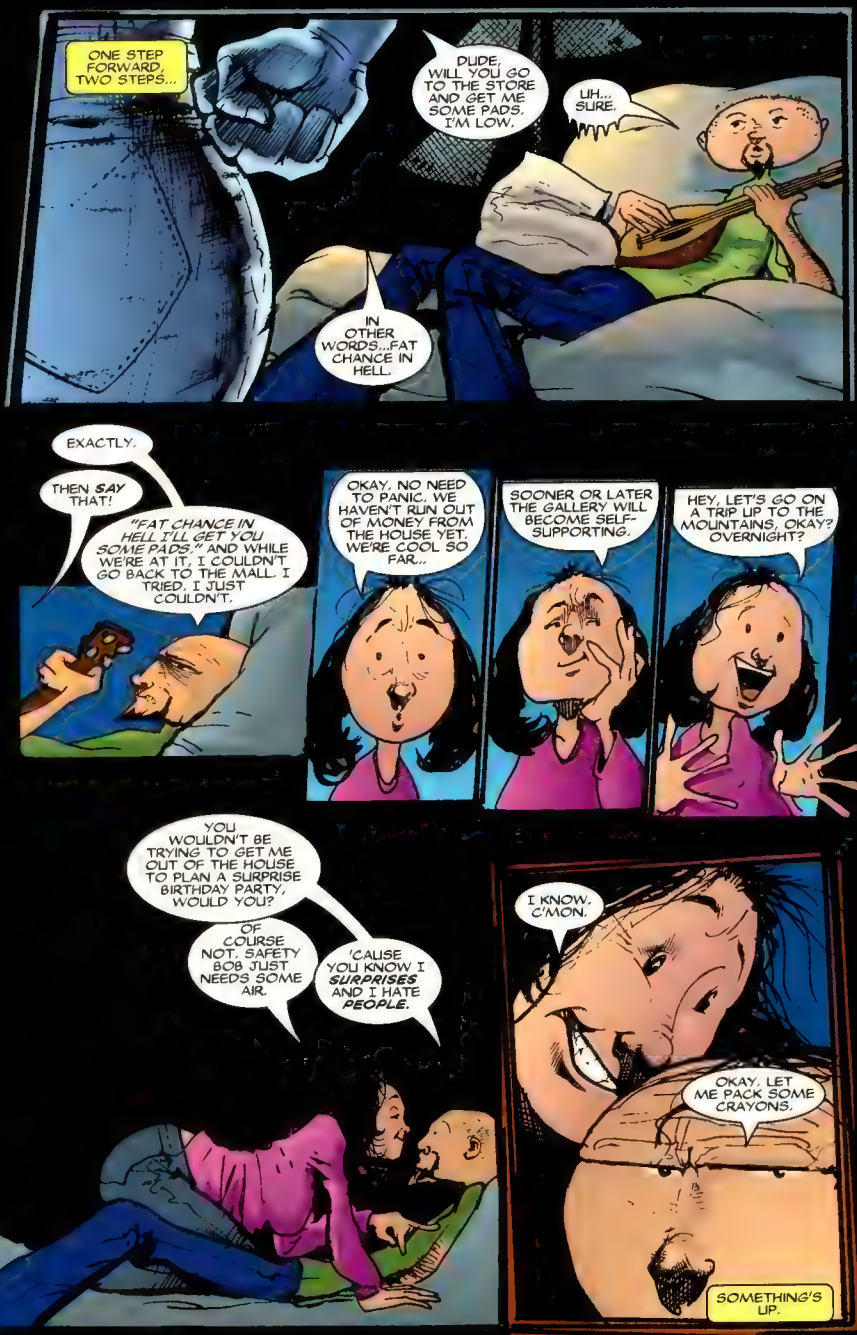
WELL, DADDY, I GUESS WE'D BETTER GET GOING.
DUDE, TAKE A LOOK AT THESE.
DADDY, PLEASE. DUDE DOESN'T WANNA SEE THOSE STUPID CARVINGS.
YOU CARVE?
YUP, IT'S JUST A HOBBY. I'D LIKE TO TEACH MICKEY, BUT SHE JUST LAUGHS.
SEE HOW EACH MARK STANDS FOR SOMETHING? LIKE THIS ONE'S MICKEY'S BIRTHDAY, HERE'S OUR TRIP TO BIG BEAR...
BY THE WAY, DADDY, I'M COMING BY NEXT WEEK WITH A CHECK FOR MY FULL STUDENT LOAN.
AND I DON'T EVER WANT YOU CALLING ME A RUNT OR A PIGLET AGAIN!
I DON'T MUCH CARE FOR YOUR TONE, MISSY. I THINK YOU'D BETTER GO.
WOW. HOW COOL. ALL ON A STICK!
YOU EVER THOUGHT OF CARVING, DUDE?
THAT'D BE PERFECT FOR YOU, HONEY... YOU CAN'T KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF YOUR STICK.
MICKEY, SHHH.
UH... G'BYE, MISTER BOWLIN.
WOW. THAT WAS A WHOLE NEW SIDE OF YOUR DAD I NEVER KNEW OF.
SO WHAT? I JUST FINALLY STOOD UP TO HIM AND ALL YOU CAN SEE ARE HIS STICKS.
THIS WHOLE CREATIVE SIDE OF HIM IS WASTED ON YOU AND YOUR SISTERS.
GROW UP, MICKEY! YOUR DAD WILL NEVER GIVE YOU APPROVAL THE WAY YOU WANT IT.
BUT MAYBE TAKING AN INTEREST IN SOMETHING HE LIKES WILL REALLY SHOW HIM YOU'RE NOT 4 YEARS OLD.

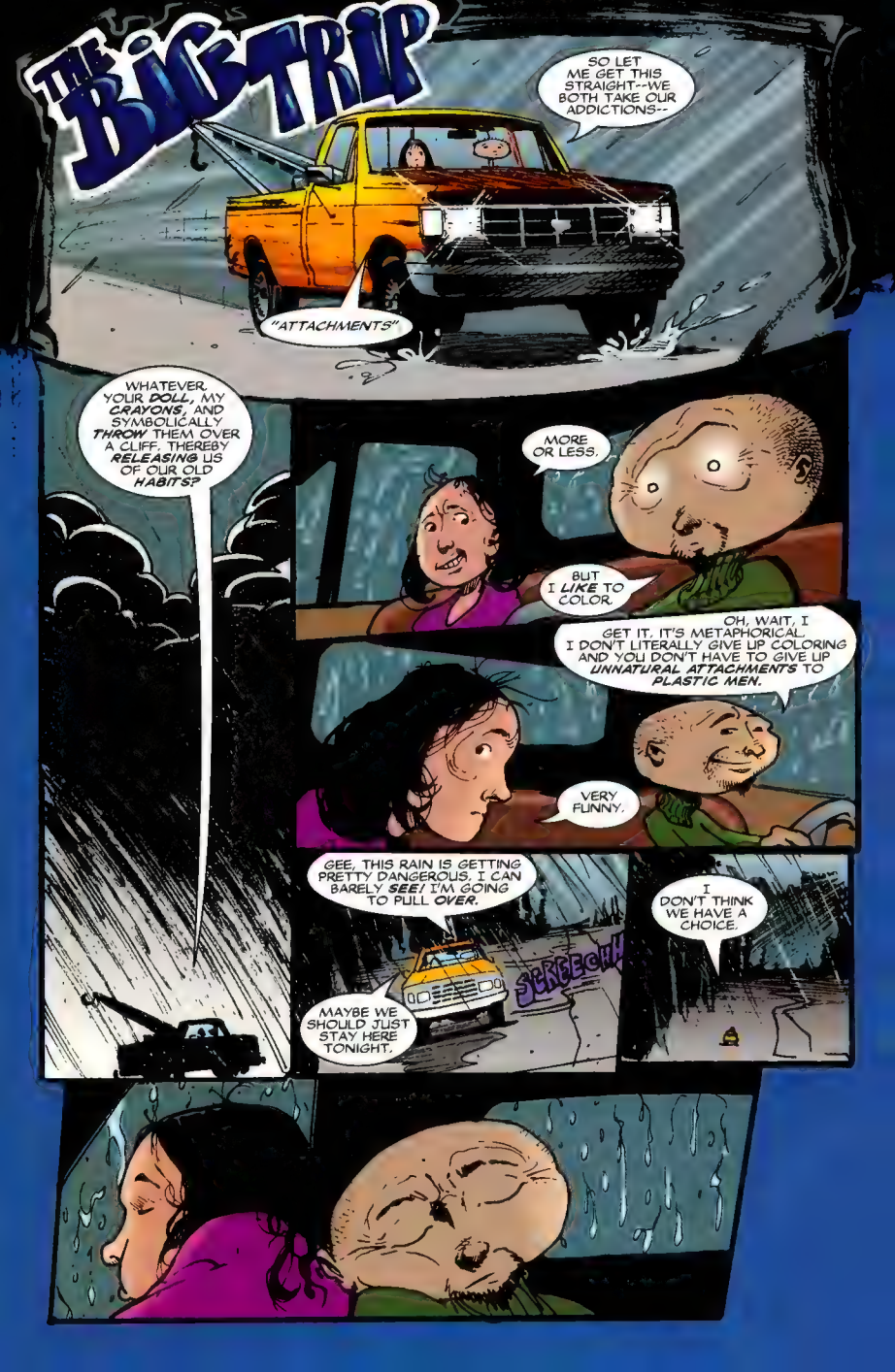
WELL, DUDE, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
AT LEAST THIS ONE'S GOT NORMAL-SIZED WHEELS.
YEAH, WE'LL HAVE TO FIX THAT. DAD ALWAYS SAID I'D NEVER GET MY OWN TRUCK. BUT HERE IT IS!
YOU KNOW, MICKEY, YOU'VE GROWN.
THE "OLD YOU" WOULD'VE RUN INSIDE AND CALLED HIM UP JUST TO...
...MICKEY?
FOR ME, GOING BACK TO THE MALL IS LIKE RETURNING TO THE GHETTO. I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHY I CAME BACK.
MAYBE I'M HOPING IF THINGS GET TOUGH, I CAN CRAWL BACK TO MY OLD LIFE.
MY BOSS SENT ME THEIR NEW OUTFITS HOPING I'D RETURN.
THAT SEALED IT ALONE.
WELL, THERE'S NO GOING BACK. I HOPE I DON'T SCREW UP SID'S BUSINESS, TOO. I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO BE...
EXIT

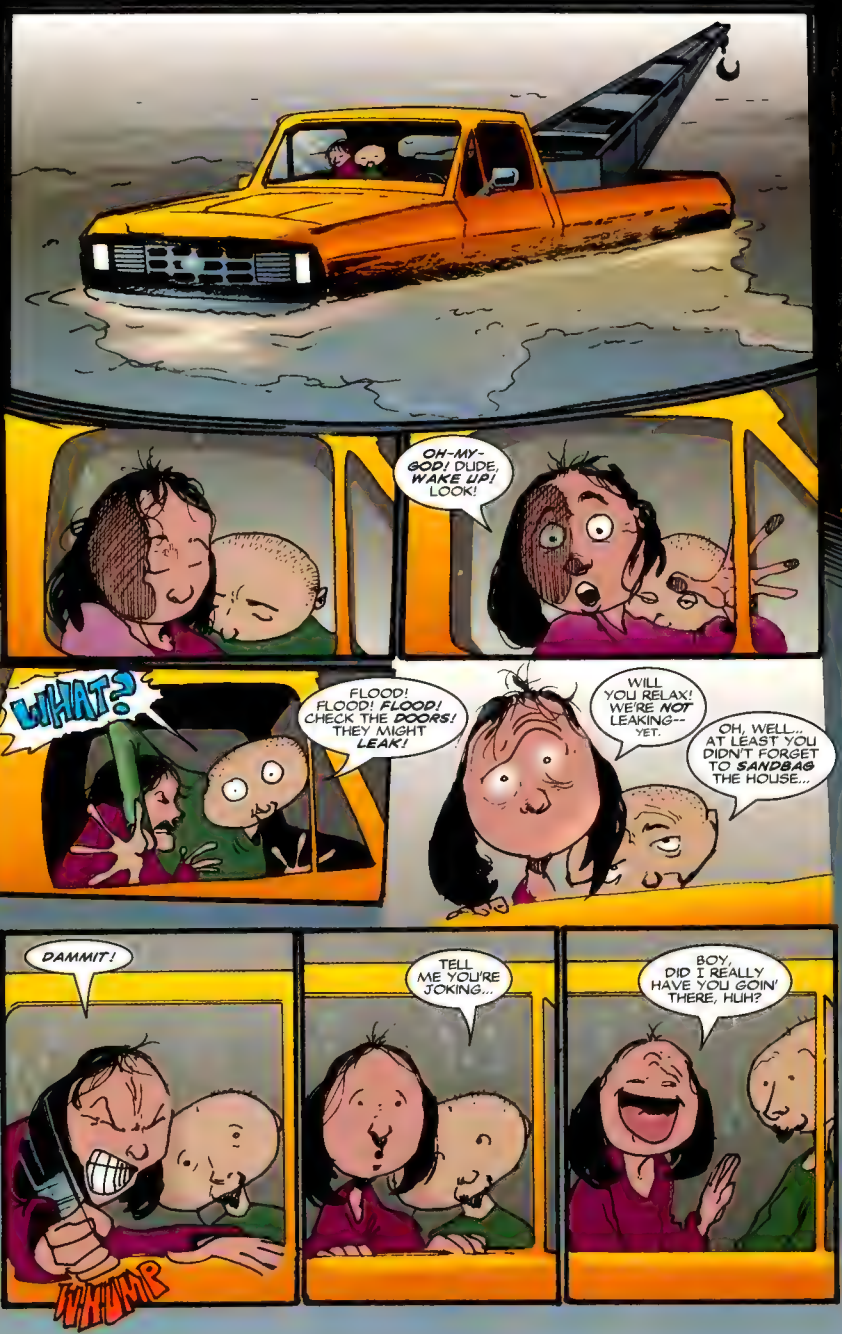
...TRUTHFUL. AFTER THAT I BECAME A CONVERT. IN EVERY INSTANCE I HAD TO TELL THE TRUTH... AS I SAW IT.
HOW WAS YOUR MEAL?
IT WAS REALLY BAD, TERRIBLE IN FACT!
I REALIZED I NEVER TOLD THE TRUTH BEFORE BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF OTHERS' DISAPPROVAL. BUT NOW I WAS FREE.
WELL! THERE'S NO NEED TO BE RUDE!
NOT RUDE--JUST HONEST!
IT'S KIND OF COOL SEEING THAT THE WHOLE WORLD DOESN'T COLLAPSE WHEN YOU'RE BLUNT! SOMETIMES I THINK MICKEY THINKS SHE CREATED A MONSTER.
DUDE, I COULD USE SOME HELP IN HERE...
SORRY, HON, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE DOING THE LAUNDRY. JUST BEING TRUTHFUL.
OK, FAIR ENOUGH, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE HELPING YOU STRETCH CANVASSES.
HMMM...
I'VE BEEN THINKING, AND I'VE DECIDED I WANT HELP STRETCHING CANVASSES MORE THAN I DON'T WANT TO DO LAUNDRY.
A WISE MAN.
SO I BOUNCED BACK AND FORTH A BIT, BUT AT LEAST I WAS BREAKING THE CYCLE OF LYING TO MYSELF.
I ALSO REALIZED SOME QUESTIONS DON'T REQUIRE AN HONEST ANSWER.
LIKE MICKEY'S COUSIN ASKING IF I THOUGHT HER BLOUSE WAS UGLY.
SMACK
PURELY RHETORICAL.
THEN I REALIZED IT'S NOT THAT I CAN'T LIE, I JUST HAVE TO CHOOSE WHEN.

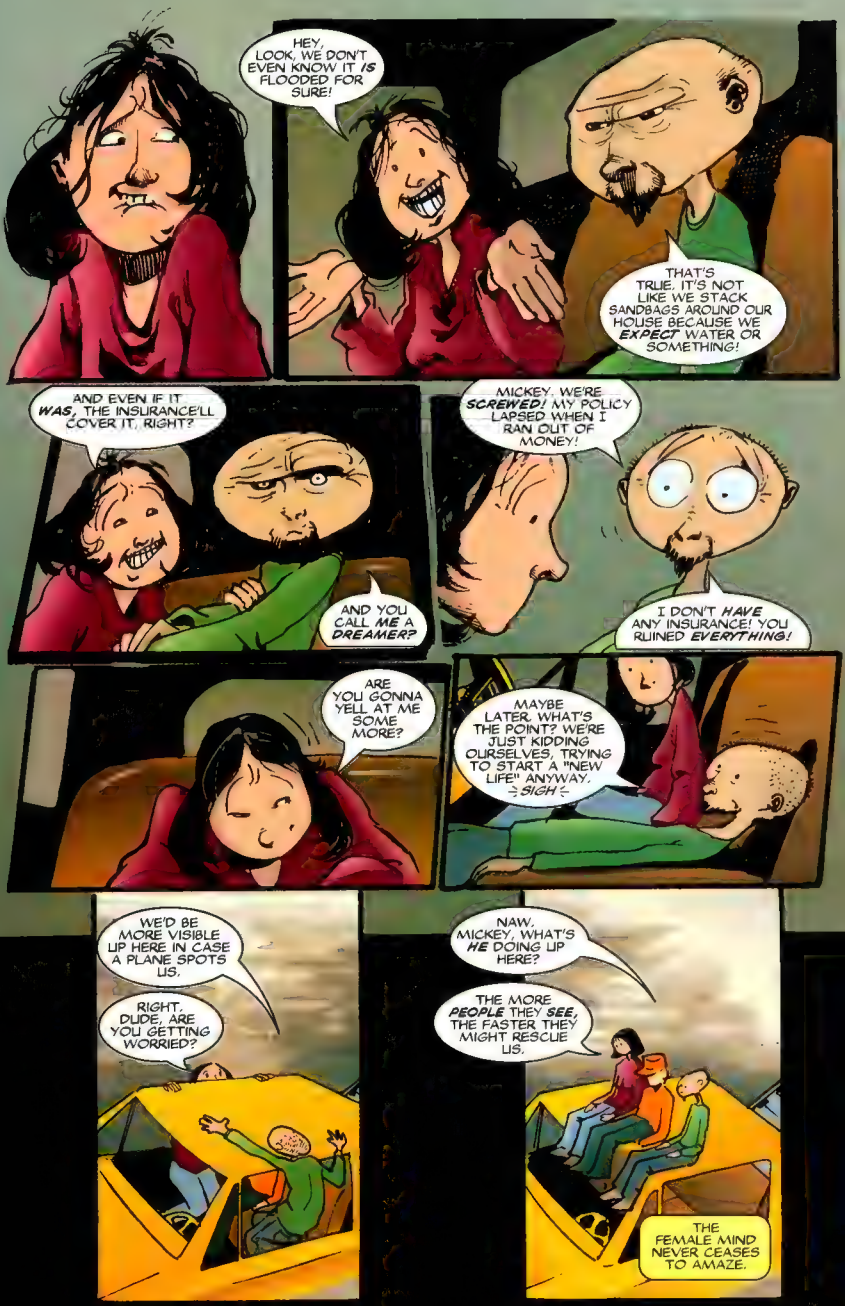
HI, DAD. HOW'S IT GOING?
MICKEY! HAVE A SEAT. WHAT'S UP?
I'VE GOT THAT CHECK FOR YOU.
I DON'T REALLY NEED IT, HONEY. WHY DON'T YOU AND DUDE KEEP IT?
I NEED YOU TO TAKE IT DADDY. WILL YOU?
I GUESS, IF IT MEANS SO DAMN MUCH TO YOU.
IT DOES.
HERE, I GOT YOU A PLUG OF WOOD.
HEY, DOES THIS MEAN YOU WANNA TAKE UP CARVING?
NOPE. BORES ME SILLY.
SORRY.
S'OKAY. LISTEN, MICKEY... I JUST WANTED TO SAY...
NO, NO, YOU'RE DOING IT ALL WRONG. GO UP AND DOWN. LIKE ME. WATCH.
I'D LIKE TO WATCH YOU GO UP AND DOWN.
C'MERE...
SLAP
DRIP
SMACK
HEY, THAT HURTS!
WHY DO YOU THINK I'M DOING IT?

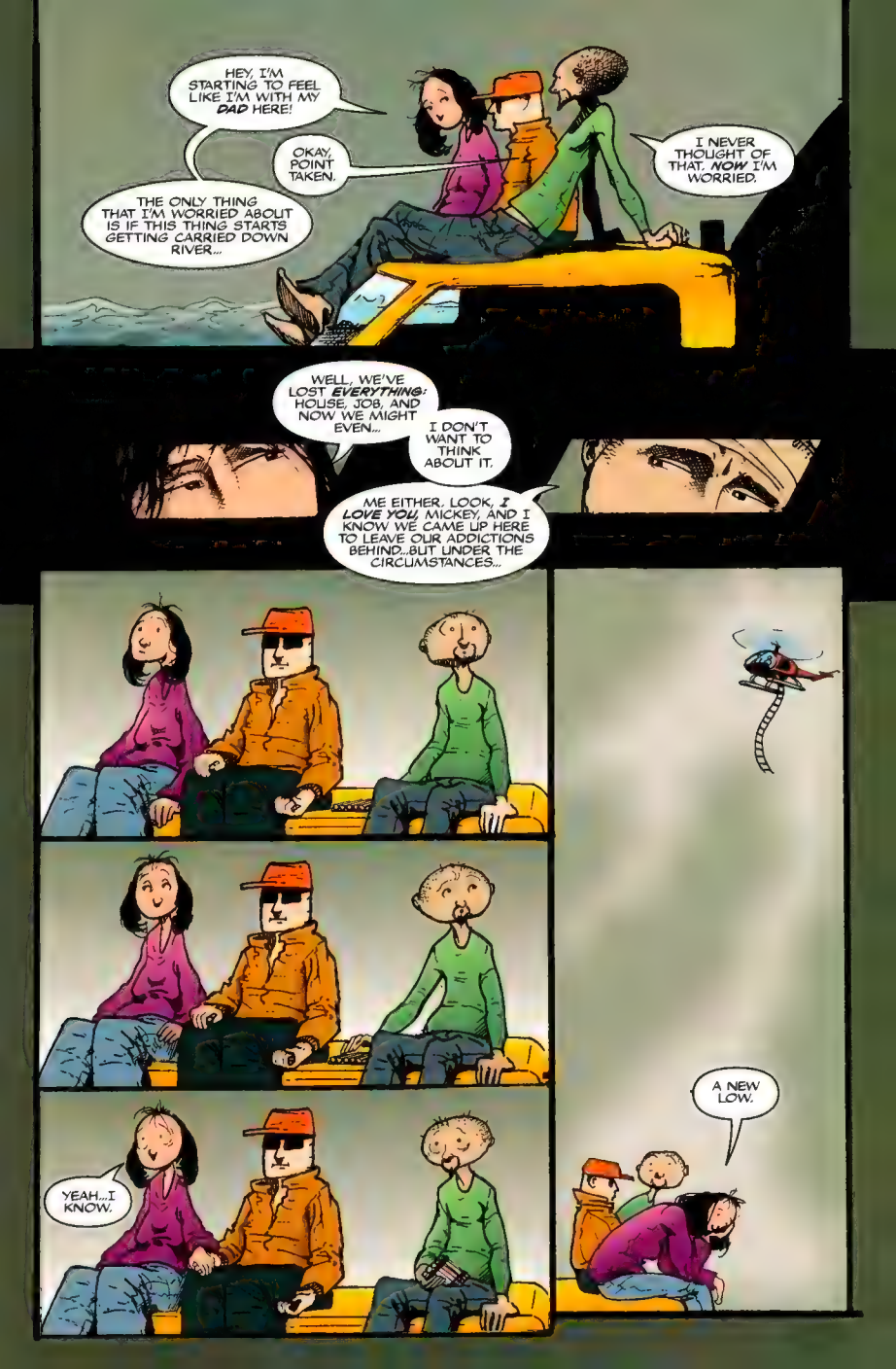

AHEM. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PAINTING A GALLERY.
CAN I PRY YOU TWO APART FOR A SEC?
DUDE, I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.
SURE, SID. WHAT IS IT?
I HEARD YOU MENTION YOU DID THE BOOKKEEPING AT YOUR OLD JOB. WANNA TAKE IT OVER HERE?
SID, IF I TAKE OVER THE BOOKS I WILL ONLY SCREW 'EM UP. THAT'S WHY I GOT FIRED FROM MY OLD JOB. I WANT TO DO THIS RIGHT, MORE THAN LOOK LIKE A WIMP.
DON'T WORRY, DUDE. WE CAN ALWAYS FIND A BOOKKEEPER, AND A REAL WIMP WOULD'VE TRIED TO SAVE FACE ONLY TO SCREW UP OUR BUSINESS.
YEAH... I'VE KNOWN GUYS LIKE THAT...
WE ALL HAVE, DUDE. WE ALL HAVE.


ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS...
DUDE, WILL YOU GO TO THE STORE AND GET ME SOME PADS. I'M LOW.
UH... SURE.
IN OTHER WORDS...FAT CHANCE IN HELL.
EXACTLY.
THEN SAY THAT!
"FAT CHANCE IN HELL I'LL GET YOU SOME PADS." AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT, I COULDN'T GO BACK TO THE MALL. I TRIED. I JUST COULDN'T.
OKAY. NO NEED TO PANIC. WE HAVEN'T RUN OUT OF MONEY FROM THE HOUSE YET. WE'RE COOL SO FAR...
SOONER OR LATER THE GALLERY WILL BECOME SELF-SUPPORTING.
HEY, LET'S GO ON A TRIP UP TO THE MOUNTAINS, OKAY? OVERNIGHT?
YOU WOULDN'T BE TRYING TO GET ME OUT OF THE HOUSE TO PLAN A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY, WOULD YOU?
OF COURSE NOT. SAFETY BOB JUST NEEDS SOME AIR.
'CAUSE YOU KNOW I SURPRISES AND I HATE PEOPLE.
I KNOW. C'MON.
OKAY. LET ME PACK SOME CRAYONS.
SOMETHING'S UP.

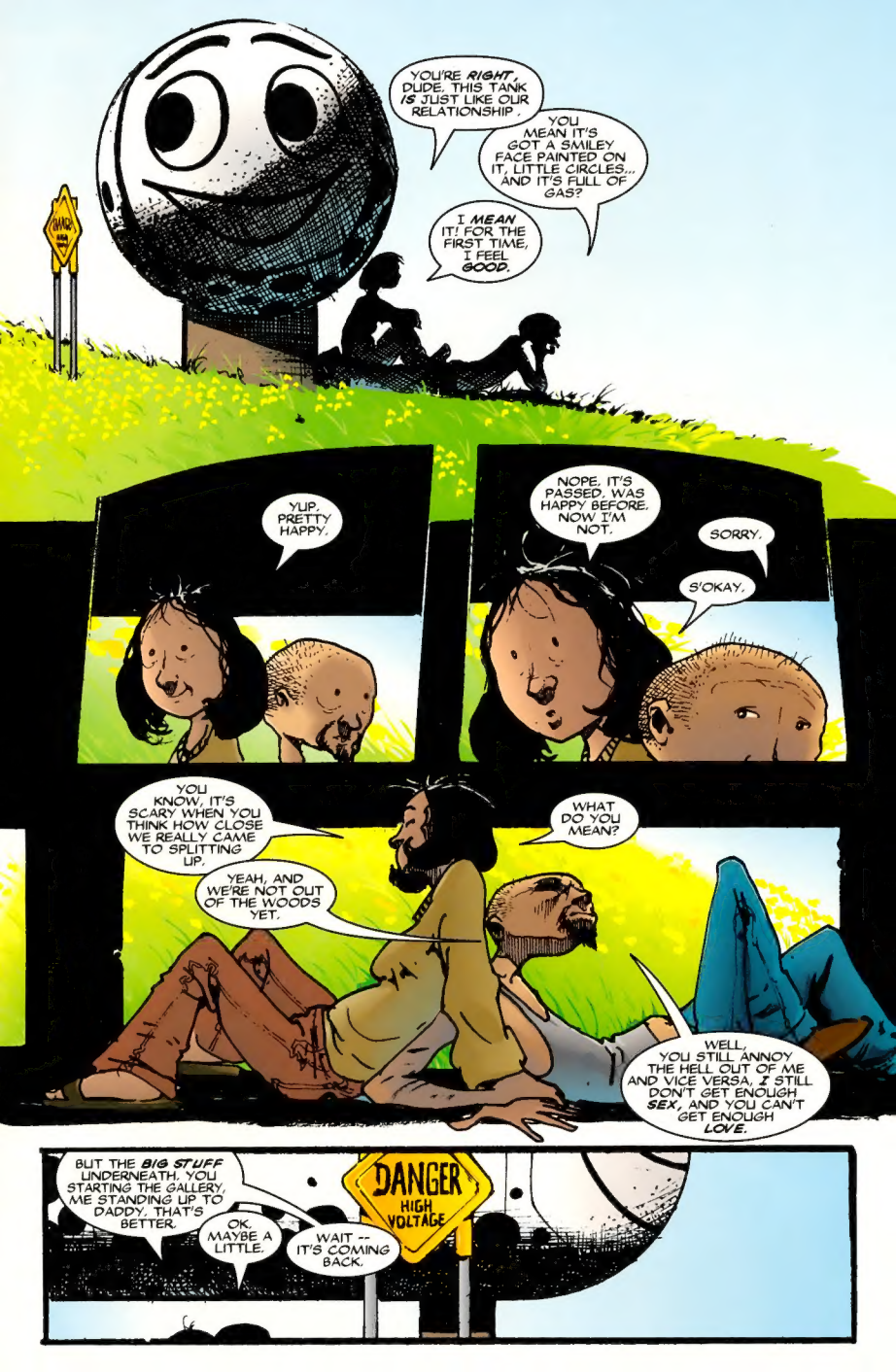

THE BIG TRIP
SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT--WE BOTH TAKE OUR ADDICTIONS--
"ATTACHMENTS"
WHATEVER. YOUR DOLL, MY CRAYONS, AND SYMBOLICALLY THROW THEM OVER A CLIFF, THEREBY RELEASING US OF OUR OLD HABITS?
MORE OR LESS.
BUT I LIKE TO COLOR.
OH, WAIT, I GET IT. IT'S METAPHORICAL. I DON'T LITERALLY GIVE UP COLORING AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE UP UNNATURAL ATTACHMENTS TO PLASTIC MEN.
VERY FUNNY.
GEE, THIS RAIN IS GETTING PRETTY DANGEROUS. I CAN BARELY SEE! I'M GOING TO PULL OVER.
SCREECH!!
MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST STAY HERE TONIGHT.
I DON'T THINK WE HAVE A CHOICE.

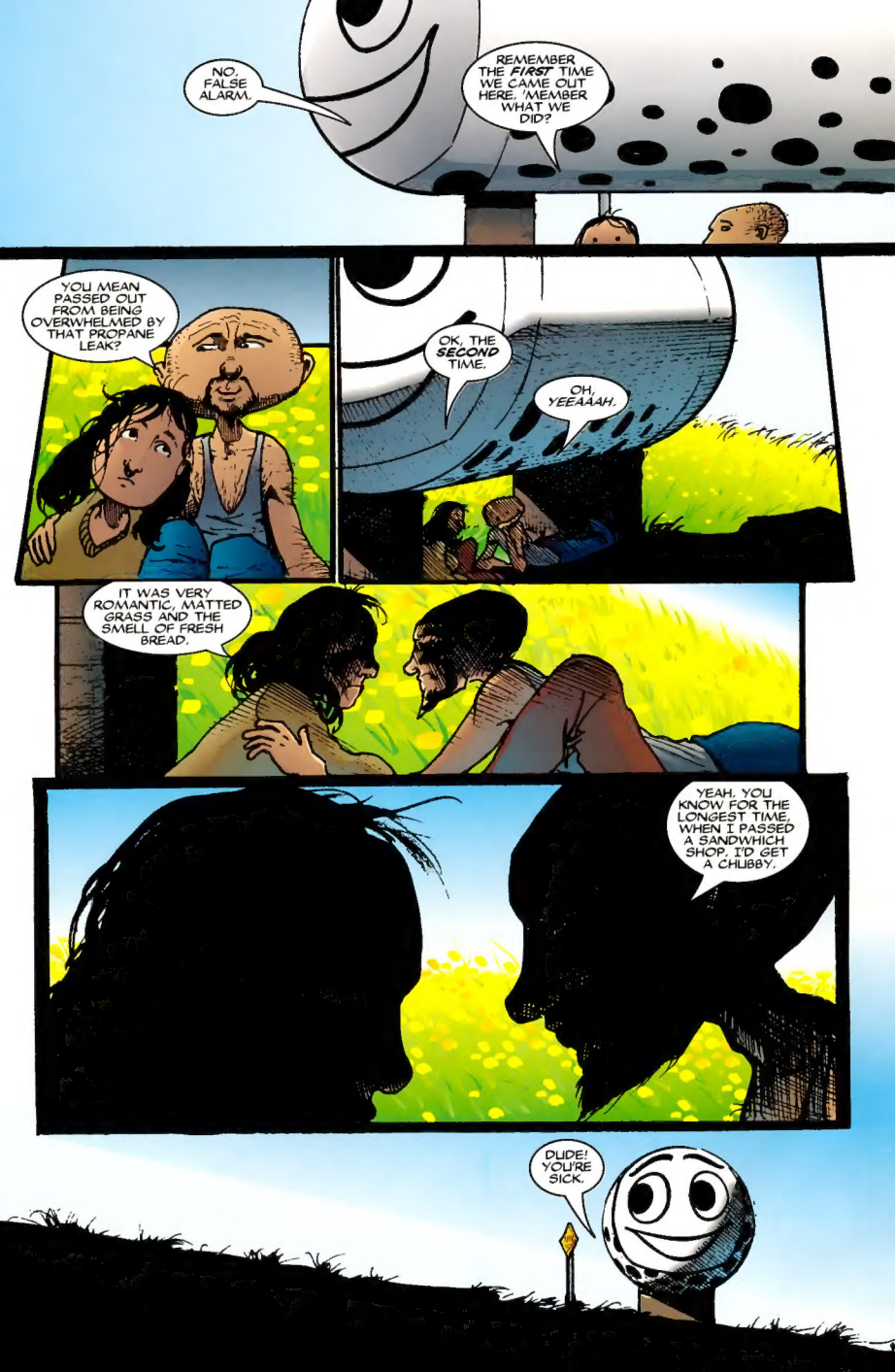

OH-MY-GOD! DUDE, WAKE UP! LOOK!
WHAT?
FLOOD! FLOOD! FLOOD! CHECK THE DOORS! THEY MIGHT LEAK!
WILL YOU RELAX! WE'RE NOT LEAKING-- YET.
OH, WELL... AT LEAST YOU DIDN'T FORGET TO SANDBAG THE HOUSE...
DAMMIT!
WHUMP
TELL ME YOU'RE JOKING...
BOY, DID I REALLY HAVE YOU GOIN' THERE, HUH?


HEY, LOOK, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IT *IS* FLOODED FOR SURE!
THAT'S TRUE. IT'S NOT LIKE WE STACK SANDBAGS AROUND OUR HOUSE BECAUSE WE *EXPECT* WATER OR SOMETHING!
AND EVEN IF IT *WAS*, THE INSURANCE'LL COVER IT, RIGHT?
AND YOU CALL *ME* A *DREAMER?*
MICKEY. WE'RE *SCREWED!* MY POLICY LAPSED WHEN I RAN OUT OF MONEY!
I DON'T *HAVE* ANY INSURANCE! YOU RUINED *EVERYTHING!*
ARE YOU GONNA YELL AT ME SOME MORE?
MAYBE LATER. WHAT'S THE POINT? WE'RE JUST KIDDING OURSELVES, TRYING TO START A "NEW LIFE" ANYWAY. -*SIGH*-
WE'D BE MORE VISIBLE UP HERE IN CASE A PLANE SPOTS US.
RIGHT, DUDE, ARE YOU GETTING WORRIED?
NAW, MICKEY, WHAT'S *HE* DOING UP HERE?
THE MORE *PEOPLE* THEY *SEE*, THE FASTER THEY MIGHT RESCUE US.
THE FEMALE MIND NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE.


HEY, I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE I'M WITH MY DAD HERE!
OKAY, POINT TAKEN.
I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT. NOW I'M WORRIED.
THE ONLY THING THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT IS IF THIS THING STARTS GETTING CARRIED DOWN RIVER...
WELL, WE'VE LOST EVERYTHING: HOUSE, JOB, AND NOW WE MIGHT EVEN...
I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.
ME EITHER. LOOK, I LOVE YOU, MICKEY, AND I KNOW WE CAME UP HERE TO LEAVE OUR ADDICTIONS BEHIND...BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES...
YEAH...I KNOW.
A NEW LOW.

GRAB THE ROPE!
HOLD ON. I'LL JUST GET MY DOLL--
IT'S TOO WINDY. CLIMB UP NOW!
THUNK
WAIT. JUST LET ME--
THERE'S NO TIME! DUDE, WE'VE GOT TO LEAVE IT BEHIND!
WHAT ABOUT THE GUY WITH THE CRAYONS?
TOO LATE.
HE'S GONE.


YOU'RE RIGHT, DUDE. THIS TANK IS JUST LIKE OUR RELATIONSHIP.
YOU MEAN IT'S GOT A SMILEY FACE PAINTED ON IT, LITTLE CIRCLES... AND IT'S FULL OF GAS?
I MEAN IT! FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FEEL GOOD.
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE
YUP. PRETTY HAPPY.
NOPE. IT'S PASSED. WAS HAPPY BEFORE. NOW I'M NOT.
SORRY.
S'OKAY.
YOU KNOW, IT'S SCARY WHEN YOU THINK HOW CLOSE WE REALLY CAME TO SPLITTING UP.
YEAH, AND WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, YOU STILL ANNOY THE HELL OUT OF ME AND VICE VERSA, I STILL DON'T GET ENOUGH SEX, AND YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH LOVE.
BUT THE BIG STUFF UNDERNEATH. YOU STARTING THE GALLERY, ME STANDING UP TO DADDY, THAT'S BETTER.
OK, MAYBE A LITTLE.
WAIT -- IT'S COMING BACK.
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE


NO. FALSE ALARM.
REMEMBER THE *FIRST* TIME WE CAME OUT HERE. 'MEMBER WHAT WE DID?
YOU MEAN PASSED OUT FROM BEING OVERWHELMED BY THAT PROPANE LEAK?
OK. THE *SECOND* TIME.
OH, YEEAAAH.
IT WAS VERY ROMANTIC, MATTED GRASS AND THE SMELL OF FRESH BREAD.
YEAH. YOU KNOW FOR THE LONGEST TIME, WHEN I PASSED A SANDWHICH SHOP, I'D GET A CHUBBY.
DUDE! YOU'RE SICK.

ODD MAN OUT!

BONE#25 on sale in July 1996

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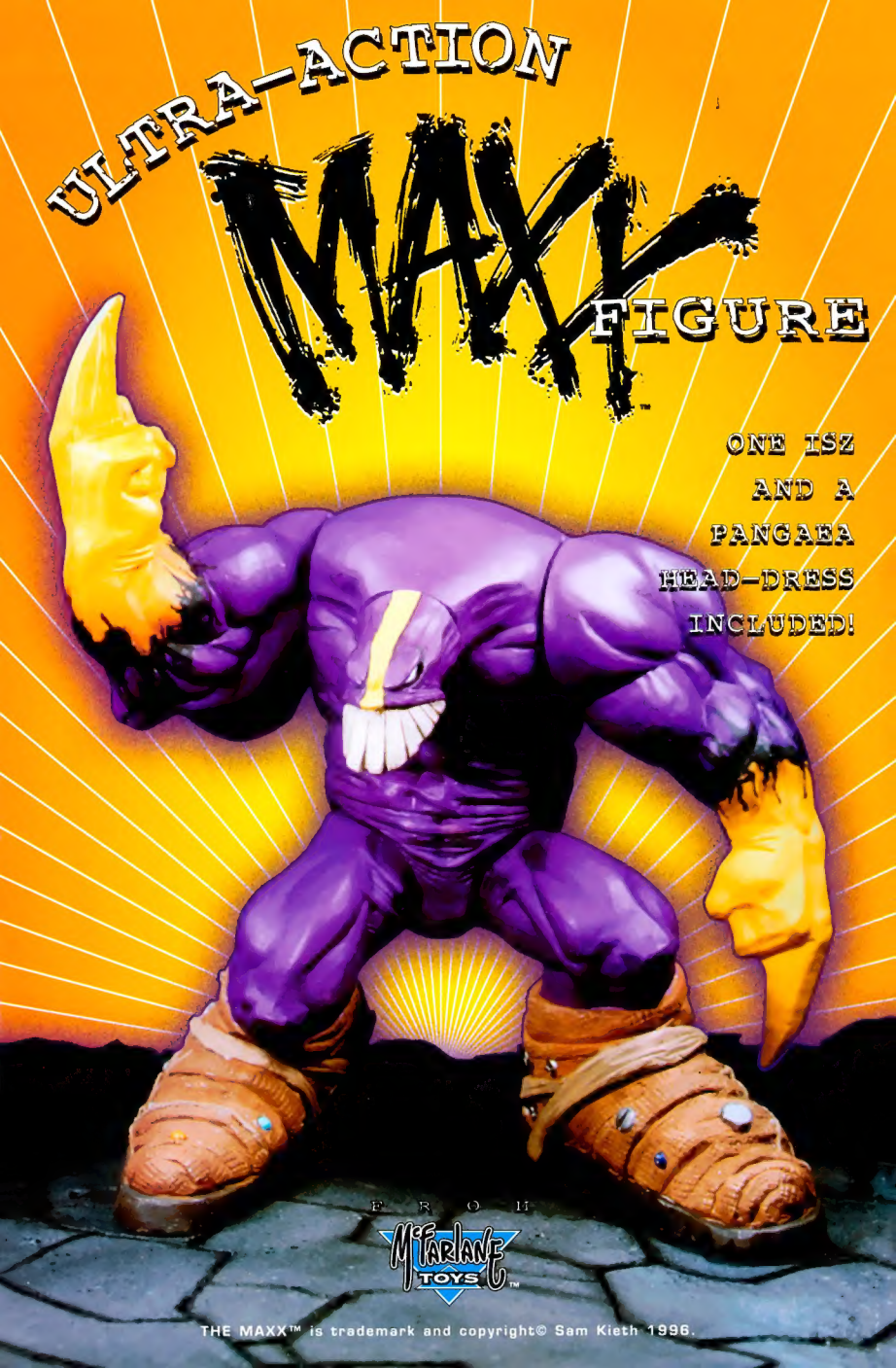
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